

The Embassy of Sir Francis Bertie in Paris during the period
1905-1914.

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Abstract.

This thesis is an examination of the career of Sir Francis Bertie during the period between his appointment as British ambassador to France in January 1905 and the outbreak of the first world war. As such it is concerned with Bertie's role in the development of Anglo-French relations in the decade before 1914. It is, however, in no sense a comprehensive study of the entente cordiale, and matters such as the conversations between the British and French military and naval authorities are dealt with only in so far as they were of interest to Bertie and his colleagues.

Bertie had by the time of his appointment to Paris already been engaged in the administration and conduct of foreign policy for more than thirty years. His experience had led him to conclude that Germany had expansionist ambitions which constituted a major threat to the security of the British empire. While the Anglo-Japanese alliance and Japan's victories in the Far East placed severe restraints upon Russia, the convention concluded by Lansdowne and Delcassé in April 1904 seemed to make a conflict between Britain and France unlikely. With this in mind Bertie strove to maintain and strengthen the entente. During the two Moroccan crises he encouraged first Lansdowne and then Grey to give their full support to France in resisting German pretensions. On other occasions he urged Grey to avoid any one-sided bargains with Germany, and to do nothing that might cause the French to suspect Britain's intentions. Anglo-French relations were not, however, free from friction in these years, and the efforts in which Bertie was involved to extend co-operation

between the two powers beyond the strictly political sphere met with little success. Moreover, Bertie had little sympathy for France's ally, Russia, whose diplomacy in the Balkans he came to regard as a menace to the peace of Europe.

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List of Abbreviations.

<u>A.A.</u>	Das Auswärtige Amt, Berlin.
<u>A.A.E.</u>	Les Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris.
<u>B.I.F.</u>	La Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris.
<u>B.D.</u>	<u>British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914</u> , (edited by G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley (11 vols., London, 1926-1938)).
<u>B.M.</u>	The British Museum, London.
<u>B.N.</u>	La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
<u>C.I.D.</u>	The Committee of Imperial Defence.
<u>Correspondance</u>	<u>Paul Cambon: correspondance</u> , edited by H. Cambon (3 vols., Paris, 1940-1946).
<u>D.D.F.</u>	<u>Les Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1871-1914</u> , Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, commission de publication des documents relatifs aux origines de la guerre de 1914 (3 series, Paris, 1929-1957).
<u>F.O.</u>	The Foreign Office, London.
<u>G.P.</u>	<u>Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914</u> , edited by J. Lepsius, A. Mendelssohn Bartholdy and F. Thimme (40 vols., Berlin, 1922-1927).
<u>M.A.</u>	Das Ministerium des Aussern, Vienna.
<u>N.L.S.</u>	The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
<u>N.S.</u>	La Nouvelle Série.
<u>O-U.</u>	<u>Osterreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik, 1908-1914</u> , edited by L. Bittner and H. Uebersberger (8 vols., Vienna, 1930)

Introduction.

Sir Francis Leveson Bertie was already sixty years of age when on the afternoon of 12 January 1905 he arrived at Paris to assume the duties of British Ambassador there. Although he had been ambassador at Rome since January 1903, his career during the previous forty years had been spent almost entirely within the confines of the Foreign Office. Only on two occasions during that time had he been required to travel overseas in an official capacity. In June 1878 he had been attached as acting second secretary to the special embassy to the congress of Berlin, and in December 1881 he had accompanied the earl of Fife on a mission to invest the king of Saxony with the order of the garter.¹ Nevertheless, Bertie was not ill-endowed either in ability or pedigree for his new post. Indeed, in a draft address, which he prepared for his first meeting with the president of the republic, he claimed that he possessed an hereditary title to the Paris embassy.² One of his ancestors, Lord Norris of Rycote, had been ambassador to France in the sixteenth century, and his father-in-law, the first Lord Cowley, had held the same office during the reign

1. In the autumn of 1897 Bertie also paid an unofficial visit to Constantinople. There he enjoyed the hospitality of Sir Philip Currie, who, after having been permanent under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office, had been appointed ambassador to Turkey. According to Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the first secretary at Constantinople, it was probably Bertie who persuaded his former chief to meet the sultan whom he had been avoiding for over a year. Currie was Bertie's immediate predecessor at Rome. E.T.S. Dugdale, Maurice de Bunsen, Diplomat and Friend, (London, 1934), pp.147-148.

2. Draft declaration by Bertie, Jan.1905, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183. Owing to the death of the mother of Emile Loubet, the president of the republic, Bertie was unable to present his letters of credence until 23 January. When he did so, he seems not to have used the above draft. Mollard to Bertie, 16 and 18 Jan.1905, F.O.146/3858. 'Remise des lettres de l'ambassadeur de l'Angleterre', Jan.1905, Delcassé MSS., 14 (A.A.E.)

of Napoleon III.³

7.

Born on 17 August 1844, the second son of the sixth earl of Abingdon, Bertie had been educated at Eton, and then despatched abroad in order to perfect his languages. At nineteen he had sat and obtained the highest marks in a competitive examination for entry into the Foreign Office. There he had progressed steadily up the professional ladder until in January 1894 he was appointed as an assistant under-secretary of state. For the next nine years he had charge of the business connected with the Asiatic, and after 1898, the African departments of the office.⁴

A man of boundless energy, Bertie was a strict task-master. He admired and required efficiency in his subordinates and peers alike, and to fail to meet his standards was to risk an explosion of his violent temper.⁵ At Paris his blunt frankness and caustic tongue led the junior staff of the embassy to baptize him "The Bull": a nickname which he endeavoured to live up to.

3. Sir Henry, Baron Norris (or Norreys) of Rycote (1525?-1601) was appointed ambassador to France by Elizabeth I in 1566 and was recalled in 1570. He married Marjorie, the daughter of John Williams, who was created Lord Williams of Thame in 1554. Williams' death in 1559 put Norris and his wife in possession of the estate and manor house of Rycote and Thame. The manor and estate of Thame passed to their grandson, Lord Norris, Earl of Berkshire, and after to his daughter and granddaughter, who married the Earl of Lindsey. It passed through him to successive earls of Abingdon, and was left to Bertie by his father. When in 1915 Bertie was raised to the peerage, he took the title Lord Bertie of Thame. Sidney Lee (ed.) Dictionary of National Biography, xli (London, 1895) 122-124. Bertie to the College of Arms, 7 June 1915, Bertie MSS., B., F.O.800/189.

4. In his examination Bertie scored 813/930. Ray Jones, The Nineteenth Century Foreign Office: an administrative history, (London, 1971), pp.79-82 and 167.

5. Rennell Rodd, who knew Bertie when he had charge of the eastern department later recorded that he 'tempered his impeccable official precision and extremely able superintendence of public affairs with a crudity and licence of expression in personal relations which lifted the hair of the newly joined'. J. Rennell Rodd, Social and Diplomatic Memories, (3 series, London, 1922-1925), i, 41, and iii, 41. J. Tilley, London to Tokyo, (London 1942), pp.21-23. J. Tilley and S. Gaselee, The Foreign Office, (London, 1935), p.130. Lord Vansittart, The Mist Procession, (London, 1958), pp.53-54. Zara Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914, (Cambridge, 1969), pp.37-38 and 180-182.

Rennell Rodd, who served him at Rome, called him a 'master in the art of quarrelling', and Lord Vansittart, who was for some time attached to the chancery at Paris, later described him as 'snobbish, sternly practical, and resolutely prosaic'. 'A dying world', he wrote, 'breathed through his dilated nostrils'.⁶ Less poetically, and with little sympathy, the French premier, Joseph Caillaux, observed that he was 'as reactionary as thirty-six gendarmes'.⁷ But those who felt able to withstand his bullying, and condone his Rabelaisian conversation, found beneath his gruff exterior a far gentler soul.⁸ Moreover, his joviality and impish pranks were the delight of his colleagues at home and abroad. Though he abandoned and discouraged stump cricket in the Foreign Office, during the slack hours he contributed to the enjoyment of the assistant clerks by demonstrating how high he could kick, and his ability to cut candles in two with a sword.⁹

Bertie served his apprenticeship in a Foreign Office which was still concerned primarily with the administration rather than the determination of policy. Nevertheless, pressure of business during Lord Salisbury's final administration allowed his officials a greater opportunity for taking initiatives. Even then, however, such advice as Sir Thomas Sanderson, the permanent under-secretary, offered to him was both cautious and discreet.¹⁰ By contrast Bertie freely volunteered his views,

6. Ibid.

7. Joseph Caillaux, Mes Mémoires, (3 vols., Paris, 1942-1947), ii, 136. J.M.A. Caillaux was French minister of finance in the governments of Clemenceau (1906-1909), Monis (1911), and Doumergue (1913-1914). He was president of the council from June 1911 to January 1912.

8. Vansittart, op.cit.

9. Esme Howard, Theatre of Life, (2 vols., London, 1935), i, 325-326. Tilley and Gaselee, op.cit.

10. Lord Salisbury was prime minister from 1895 to 1902. Until 1900, he was also foreign secretary. In the latter capacity he was served by Sir Thomas Sanderson who was permanent under-secretary of state from 1894 until 1906. For a thorough examination of the administration of British Foreign policy in the nineteenth century see R.Jones, op.cit. Steiner, pp.37-38 and 48-49.

and a prolific number of minutes and memoranda bear witness to what Sir Edward Grey subsequently called his 'crisp, clear opinions'. Their significance was enhanced by the fact that in this period Britain's interests were increasingly menaced by the activities of other great powers in those areas which fell within Bertie's administrative province.¹¹

Events in Africa and Asia were regarded by Bertie almost entirely from the point of view of Britain's relations with her European neighbours. There was some truth in Caillaux's assertion that Bertie's horizon was circumscribed by his conception of Britain's interests 'petitement mesurés, vus par le gros bout de la lorgnette'.¹² He was dependent upon others for his knowledge of developments in the non-European world, and he showed little understanding of the hopes and aspirations of the Asiatic powers.¹³ Nevertheless, Bertie's ability to draw simple and straightforward conclusions from a mass of detailed information, and his professional expertise won for him the admiration both of his colleagues and of the politicians whom he served.¹⁴ His mastery of the political geography of Africa allowed him to make valuable contributions to discussions concerning that continent long after he had

11. Lady Algernon Gordon Lennox (ed.), The Diary of Lord Bertie of Thame, 1914-1918 (2 vols., London, 1924), i, p.vii. Sir E. Grey was British foreign secretary from 1905 until 1916. G. Monger, The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907 (London, 1963), pp. 99-100.

12. Caillaux, op cit.

13. George Morrison, the Australian specialist on Far Eastern affairs, commented after a conversation with Bertie that his views were 'so ignorant, so vulgarly expressed and so ill-considered that he wasn't worth listening to'. C. Pearl, Morrison of Peking (London, 1967), p. 170. I.H. Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: the Diplomacy of Two Island Empires (London, 1965), p.153.

14. Lord George Hamilton, the secretary of state for India, commented on Bertie's appointment to Rome 'I am very sorry we are to lose Bertie. He will make a good Ambassador as his practicability, courage and decision never fail him. I should like to see him afterwards at Paris'. Hamilton to Godley, 1 Jan.1903, Kilbracken MSS., 6B, (Professor Dilks of Leeds university kindly supplied this reference). Balfour to Bertie, 7 Jan.1903, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/173. Rennell Rodd, iii, 42. Monson to Lansdowne, 23 Aug.1904, Lansdowne MSS., F.O. 800/126.

left the Foreign Office. Moreover, his shrewd appreciation of the changing balance of power in the Far East and its relevance to Europe, and his determination to press his views on Lord Lansdowne, Salisbury's less experienced successor, enabled him to play a crucial role in the creation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.¹⁵

Bertie's experience in handling the African and Far Eastern business of the Foreign Office did much to shape his attitude towards Britain's future relations with the other three great imperial powers. In the face^{of} Russian and German encroachments in China, and French pressure in Africa, he recommended that the government should take a firm stand. 'I am convinced', he wrote in March 1898, 'that if we show that we mean business we shall have little trouble with our big European friends'. But he was unsympathetic towards the idea, which found favour with a section of the cabinet, of seeking an accommodation with Germany as a solution to Britain's problems.¹⁶ Irritated by German interference in June 1898 in the Anglo-Portuguese negotiations on the Delagoa railway, he opposed the arranging with them of an agreement on the reversion of Portugal's colonies. He contended that it would neither satisfy Germany's pretensions in Africa, nor secure her support in the Far East. The Germans, he concluded, would only risk a war with Russia if Britain were ready to guarantee them against an attack by the dual alliance, and to do that would be to involve Britain in a

15. Nish, 139-140, 153-157, and 570-571. Z. Steiner, 'Great Britain and the creation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', Journal of Modern History, xxxi, (1959), 27-36. Lord Lansdowne was foreign secretary from 1900 until 1905.

16. Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, pp. 39-40.

permanent quarrel with France.¹⁷

Bertie was anything but satisfied with the accord, which, despite his objections, was concluded with Germany on 30 August 1898, and the unseemly squabbling in which he was involved with the German embassy over the details of its application did nothing to enamour him to the prospect of a closer relationship with Berlin.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in the November of the following year he felt able to assure the German foreign secretary, von Bülow, that 'Englishmen generally regard the bickering between Germany and England in the press and elsewhere as in the nature of family squabbles which are carried on with great heat but disappear in time of common danger'.¹⁹ What he did find objectionable was the methods employed by the Germans in the conduct of their foreign policy. Some twenty years later he affirmed that it was during the two years which he had spent at Bonn after leaving Eton that had enabled him to 'learn the real German character'.²⁰ Yet it is also evident that he had been much impressed by the brusqueness of Bismarck's diplomacy, and what he regarded as German duplicity. He told von Bülow that Germany had 'not entirely rid itself of the Bismarckian tone which had the effect of making Englishmen resent and resist proposals made in that way'.

17. Bertie wrote of Portugal in November 1899; 'She does not lay golden eggs, but she would be of great use in the event of a war in which we had to operate in the Mediterranean and S. Atlantic and we do not want her islands to pass into other hands than our own'. Bertie to Bigge, 28 Nov. 1899, Bertie MSS., A. F.O. 800/170. Memoranda by Bertie, 30 June and 10 Aug. 1898, B.D.i, nos. 72 and 81. R. Langhorne, 'Anglo-German Negotiations concerning the future of the Portuguese Colonies', Historical Journal, xvi (1973), 361-387. Steiner, pp. 38-39.

18. Ibid.

19. Memorandum by Bertie, 26 Nov. 1899, Bertie MSS., A. F.O. 800/170. Bernhard, Count von Bülow (prince after 1905) held successively the offices of German ambassador at Rome (1895-1897), secretary of state at the foreign office (1897-1900), and imperial chancellor (1900-1909).

20. Gordon Lennox, ii, 431.

Much more (Bertie maintained) could be got from England by calm discussion than by bringing out the heavy artillery on every occasion and stating that the non-solution of a question in a particular way would have a disastrous effect on relations of the two countries. 21

The hostile reaction of the Wilhemstrasse to the seizure of German vessels during the South African war, and Germany's behaviour at the time of the Boxer rising gave Bertie no cause to modify his views.²² Moreover, the reluctance of Germany to back Britain's opposition to the Russian occupation of Manchuria seemed only to justify Bertie's previous objections to an Anglo-German accord on China.²³ He considered it preferable to defend British interests in the Far East through an accommodation with Japan, and this suggestion he continued to urge on Lansdowne during the spring and summer of 1901.²⁴ Although the foreign secretary was favourably disposed towards such an agreement, he was not prepared to completely abandon his hopes of achieving an understanding with Germany.²⁵ This led Bertie to draft in the autumn of 1901 a lengthy memorandum in which he refuted the notion of an Anglo-German alliance.²⁶

21. Memorandum by Bertie, 26 Nov. 1899, *op cit.* Bertie explained to Bulow that the ill-feeling felt in commercial circles in England towards Germany was due to her being a 'pushing and successful rival'. Bertie to Bigge, 28 Nov. 1899, *op cit.*

22. Steiner, pp. 39-40.

23. Memorandum by Bertie, 13 Sept. 1900, *B.D.*, ii, no. 12. Steiner, pp. 61-73.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.* Yet the opportunities for such an alliance were very limited. H.W. Koch, 'The Anglo-German Alliance Negotiations: missed opportunity or myth?', *History*, liv (1969), 378-392. P.M. Kennedy, 'German World Policy and the Alliance Negotiations with England, 1897-1900', *Journal of Modern History*, xlv (1973), 605-625.

26. Memorandum by Bertie, 9 Nov. 1901, *B.D.*, ii, no. 91. A slightly different version of this memorandum has been found in the Royal Archives dated 27 Oct. 1901. It is printed in K. Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 464-469. As Dr Bourne has pointed out no copy of this memorandum is to be found in the Sanderson MSS., where Professors Gooch and Temperley claim to have found the above version. *Sanderson MSS.*, F.O. 800/1-2.

The views which it contained were to be echoed on several occasions during the next thirteen years in Bertie's letters and despatches.

Bertie admitted that 'it would be a relief to be able to feel that we had secured a powerful and sure ally for the contingency of an attack on the British Empire by two Powers such as France and Russia combined'. But he also insisted upon the deceitful nature of Germany's diplomacy and the weak position which she occupied in Europe. 'She is surrounded', he wrote, 'by Governments who distrust her and peoples who dislike or at all events do not like her'. Her two allies, Austria and Italy, both had serious domestic problems. If Britain were to arrive at a general understanding with France and Russia, Germany's position, he reasoned, would become critical, and it was therefore an object of her policy to foster friction between these three powers. On the other hand, he claimed that no effective aid would be forthcoming from Germany in opposition to Russia, unless she were obliged by European considerations to take part in a war.²⁷

Between Britain and Germany Bertie believed there to be differences, some of which were irreconcilable. Despite German protestations of friendship, they had not proved to be particularly co-operative where China and Morocco were concerned, they had little in common with Britain in Turkish affairs, and they had opposed her over Koweit. Besides he thought that Germany was bent upon becoming a great naval power, and would

27. Ibid. The German reaction to Russian pressure in China and their apparent desire to commit Britain to a policy of resisting Russia helped to convince Bertie that Germany was intent upon fostering Anglo-Russian friction. 'The Germans', he observed in March 1901, 'want to push us into the water and steal our clothes'. J.A.S.Grenville, 'Lansdowne's abortive project of 12 March 1901 for a secret agreement with Germany'. Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, xxvii, (1954), 213.

therefore require coaling stations, the acquisition of some of which Britain might be obliged to resist. An alliance in these circumstances might, he feared, lead 'to estrangement and end in an open quarrel'. Instead he suggested that the two countries should agree on a declaration of policy limited to Europe and the Mediterranean, which would define the interests that they would defend together.

Above all Bertie was anxious that closer ties with Germany should not be allowed to weaken Britain's diplomatic position. He estimated that if Britain were to bind herself to a formal defensive alliance with Germany, and practically join the triple alliance,

...we shall never be on decent terms with France our neighbours in Europe and in many parts of the world, or with Russia whose frontiers are conterminous with ours, or nearly so, over a large portion of Asia.

Britain, he observed, held the balance of power in Europe, and the conduct of the two alliance blocs during the south African war had demonstrated that they were unlikely to combine against her. If there were ever any danger of Britain being destroyed by France and Russia in a war, then, he calculated, the Germans would be bound by their own interests to come to her defence. Britain might have to pay a high price for such aid, but, he asked, 'could it be higher than what we should lose by the sacrifice of our liberty to pursue a British world policy?'²⁸

Bertie's memorandum reflected his deep distrust of the motives behind German diplomacy.²⁹ It also indicated that

28. Ibid. B.D.ii, no.91. Bertie's advice was accepted by Lansdowne and on 19 December 1901 he proposed to the German Ambassador a limited agreement, such as was proposed in the memorandum. In the event the German ambassador did not consider it acceptable. J.A.S.Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy the close of the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1964), pp.360-362.

29. On the German attitude towards the Portuguese colonies he commented: 'The Germans are like Vultures'. Bertie to J.Chamberlain, 15 Jan.1902, Bertie MSS., A. F.O.800/176.

though he considered France and Russia to constitute the greatest threat to Britain's imperial security, he did not exclude the possibility of a general understanding with them. Such views were not uncommon. There was much public resentment in Britain over the attacks made in the German press and the Reichstag upon the conduct of the British army in south Africa, and within the foreign service Bertie's suspicions of Germany were shared by several of the younger officials.³⁰ Amongst these were Louis Mallet, an assistant clerk, William Tyrrell, who was for a time Sanderson's secretary, and Charles Hardinge, the first secretary of the British embassy at St. Petersburg.³¹ They and their friends soon emerged as an important faction inside the Foreign Office which was both hostile towards Germany, and impatient with the methods and outlook of the permanent under-secretary.

Besides being his friend and correspondent, Hardinge was an able and efficient official, and it was with these qualities in mind that Bertie tried unsuccessfully in June 1902 to secure his appointment as an assistant under-secretary.³² Bertie seems to have entertained hopes that he himself might one day succeed Sanderson. Aware, however, that there was little chance of such promotion before he reached a pensionable age, and frustrated by the 'red taperism' of the Foreign Office, he began in the autumn of 1902 to work for the reversion of the embassy at Rome.³³

30. Monger, pp.67-70. Steiner, p.65.

31. Louis Mallet was an assistant clerk 1902-1905; private secretary to Sir E. Grey, 1905-1906; senior clerk, 1906-1907; assistant under-secretary of state, 1907-1913; and British Ambassador at Constantinople 1913-1914. William G. Tyrrell was an assistant clerk, 1903-1907; a senior clerk and Grey's private secretary, 1907-1915. He later became permanent under-secretary. Charles Hardinge (after 1910 first Baron Hardinge of Penshurst), was an assistant under-secretary of state, 1903-1904; ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1904-1906; permanent under-secretary, 1906-1910. In 1910 he became viceroy of India. He returned to the Foreign Office during the first world war and was again permanent under-secretary. He later became ambassador at Paris.

32. Steiner, 70-71. Bertie to Hardinge, 4 July, 3 July and 25 July 1902; Hardinge to Bertie, 9 June and 30 July 1902; Hardinge MSS 33. R. Jones, 83. Bertie to Hardinge, 25 July 1902 *ibid.* Knollys to Bertie, 14 Oct. and 5 Nov. 1902; Bertie MSS., A.F.O.800/163.

At first Lansdowne was hesitant and may have been reluctant to lose his services at London. He even threatened to send him to Stockholm. Bertie however, found influential allies in the king, whose close friendship he enjoyed, and in his private secretary, Sir Francis Knollys. They helped him both to obtain Rome for himself, and to gain Hardinge as his successor in London.³⁴ As a result Hardinge was able to busy himself in promoting many of the administrative reforms which Bertie favoured.³⁵

Sanderson, whom Bertie personally disliked, did not consider his transfer to Rome to be an 'ideal selection'. To Sir Frank Lascelles, the British ambassador at Berlin, he wrote, 'we must hope that in the Italian climate and with much less work to do some of the asperities from which we have suffered will disappear'.³⁶ Yet the two years which Bertie spent in Italy were not amongst the happiest in his career. Although he maintained a keen interest in diplomatic appointments, he did not have opportunities such as he had known in the Foreign

34. Zara Steiner claims that 'only the insistence of the King's private secretary saved the bellicose Bertie from the choice of a very minor post or retirement'. This, however, may not have been the case. Bertie told Georges Louis, the political director of the Quai d'Orsay, that Lansdowne had wanted to keep him at London, and that he had considered proposing Stockholm because he would turn down such an appointment. Indeed, when Lansdowne discussed Bertie's future with Knollys in November 1902 he spoke 'in very high terms of the great value of his services'. According to Knollys the foreign secretary was a 'little startled' when the king suggested to him that if matters remained as they were Bertie might leave the service in a short time. Lansdowne subsequently wrote to the Italian Ambassador with regard to Bertie's appointment: 'I have known him all my life - since we were at school together and I do not think a better selection could possibly be made'. Steiner, 71. Georges Louis, Les Carnets de Georges Louis, (2 vols. Paris 1926), 1, 135. Knollys to Bertie, 10 Nov; 21 Dec. 1902; Bertie to Knollys, 19 and 27 Dec. 1902; Bertie MSS., A.F.O.800/163. Lansdowne to the Italian ambassador, 30 Dec. 1902; Lansdowne MSS.; F.O.800/132.

35. Steiner, 71-72.

36. Sanderson to Lascelles, 31 Dec. 1902. Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/11.

Office for taking initiatives in the formulation of foreign policy.³⁷ This must have been particularly galling to him in a period when Russia and Japan were drifting towards war, and when fear of international complications in the Far East and Morocco was leading Lansdowne to seek a settlement of the various outstanding differences which were still dividing Britain and France in Africa and Asia. Indeed, with the exception of such information as he was able to glean from the confidential print, Bertie knew little of the details of the negotiations which led to the conclusion of the Anglo-French accord of 8 April 1904.³⁸ 'In Downing Street.', Bertie confessed, 'one can at least pull the wires whereas an Ambassador is only a d-d marionette'.³⁹

It was doubtless with a view to securing a position which would allow him more scope for the exercise of his talents that after less than a year at Rome Bertie set his sights upon the embassy at Paris. Sir Edmund Monson, the ambassador there, was due to retire in 1904 and Bertie aspired to be his successor. He was fortunate in being able to rely upon the support of Hardinge, who, with the backing of the king, was soon to return

37. Hardinge wrote to Bertie in June 1903, 'I am confident that you sometimes regret the F.O. . . . I suspect at Rome the comparative leisure, will, however delightful, inspire you with twinges of remorse for having abandoned us'. Hardinge to Bertie, 26 June 1903, Bertie MSS; A, F.O.800/174. On Bertie's continuing interest in Foreign Office and diplomatic appointments see Bertie to Mallet, 29 June 1904, Bertie MSS., B. F.O.800/183.

38. Bertie to Lansdowne, 7 April 1904, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/133. The history of the negotiations which led to the conclusion of the Anglo-French agreements of 8 April 1904 is traced in detail in J.V.Rolo, Entente Cordiale. The origins and negotiation of the Anglo-French agreements of 8 April, 1904. (London, 1969), especially pp.125-129. See also Monger, pp.104-160; and C.Andrew, Theophile Delcasse and the Making of the Entente Cordiale. A reappraisal of French foreign policy, 1898-1905. (London 1968), pp.180-215.

39. V.Chirol to Hardinge, 10 Aug.1904, Hardinge MSS., 7.

as ambassador to Russia.⁴⁰ But the idea of sending Bertie to Paris met with obstruction at the 'top of the F.O.'. ⁴¹ Lansdowne was unenthusiastic about the suggestion, and Bertie believed him to be opposed to his appointment. On 11 June 1904 Bertie explained to Mallet

...I know that I am not the so-called "Foreign Office candidate" anymore than I was so for this Embassy. The little man Lord L did not mean me to come here and he does not want me to go to Paris.

Sanderson and his friends seem also to have had in mind the replacement of Monson by Nicolas O'Connor, who was then at Constantinople.⁴² Nevertheless, Bertie was once more able to count upon royal patronage and the aid of Knollys, and on 11 August Lansdowne asked him if it would suit him to go to Paris.⁴³ 'I well know', Bertie wrote that day to the King, 'that it is entirely/^{due} to Y.M's gracious advocacy that I have been offered the appointment, and I beg leave to submit my humble and most grateful thanks'.⁴⁴

40. Steiner, 73. Bertie encouraged the king to support Hardinge's candidature for St.Petersburg. But Edward VII seems initially to have thought in terms of securing that post for Bertie. Knollys to Hardinge, 1 Dec.1903; Hardinge to Edward VII, 15 Feb.1904; Edward VII to Hardinge, 15 Feb.1904; Hardinge MSS., 7. Hardinge to Bertie, 4 Dec. and 24 Dec.1903; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163, Knollys to Bertie, 23 Dec.1903; Hardinge to Bertie, 14 Feb 1904; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176. Hardinge to Bertie, (undated) 1904, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183.

41. Hardinge believed there to be a 'cabal' in the Foreign Office against Bertie securing Paris. Nevertheless, he wrote to Bertie in February 1904 that his only fear on this subject was that the government might fall 'in which case it will be impossible to foresee who will be at the F.O. and what his ideas may be'. Hardinge to Bertie, 18 Dec.1903, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183. Hardinge to Bertie, 14 Feb.1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176.

42. Ibid. Bertie to Mallet, 11 June 1904, Bertie MSS., A., F.O.800/170. Other names mentioned in connection with the succession to the Paris embassy were those of Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador at Berlin, and the Lords Esher, Cadogan and Londonderry. Hardinge to Bertie, 2 Jan, 14 March, and 4 April 1904; Bertie MSS., B., F.O.800/183. V.Chinol to Hardinge, 10 Aug.1904, Hardinge MSS., 7. Despite Lansdowne's hesitation about recommending Bertie for Paris, he felt able to write to Monson after the succession had been settled: 'I feel no doubt that he (Bertie) will do well'. Lansdowne to Monson, 26 Aug. 1904, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/126.

43. Hardinge to Bertie, 27 March, 4 April and 11 May 1904; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183. Hardinge to Bertie, 9 June and 21 July 1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176.

44. Bertie to Edward VII, 11 Aug.1904; Edward VII to Bertie, 14 Aug.1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

Opposition to his securing Paris had not in Bertie's opinion been limited to the Foreign Office. He observed to Mallet:

I do not think that the Germans would like me to be at Paris. Metternich (the German ambassador at London) I know considers me to be anti-German...⁴⁵

But the possession of such sentiments was regarded by Mallet as almost an essential qualification for an ambassador at Paris. He warned Bertie on 2 June 1904 that it had 'never been so necessary before to have someone there with his eyes open and above all to German designs'. Britain's object, he contended, should be 'to keep Germany isolated in view of her nefarious projects with regard to the Austrian Empire and Holland, to say nothing of this island'.⁴⁶ With Mallet's distrust of German intentions, Bertie agreed. Germany, he commented on 11 June,

...has never done anything for us but bleed us. She is false and grasping and our real enemy commercially and politically.

So long, however, as Britain remained on good terms with the French, he thought that there was nothing to fear from Germany. Without the active support of a naval power like France, he did not consider that Germany could injure Britain. She ought, he declared, to resist German attempts to acquire ports and coaling stations from minor powers 'even at the risk of war'. 'Subject to this', he concluded, 'I would be very civil to Germany but not be bluffed'.⁴⁷

Sanderson, who was already perturbed by the antagonism felt towards Germany by many of his subordinates, could hardly have agreed with views like these.⁴⁸ Yet when he was taken seriously

45. Bertie to Mallet, 11 June 1904, op cit.

46. Mallet to Bertie, 2 June, 1904, Bertie MSS., A., F.O.800/170.

47. Bertie to Mallet, 11 June 1904, op cit. In this connexion it is interesting to note that in a letter written to Lascelles in September 1904, Bertie expressed regret that The Times relentlessly dug its knife into Germany. Bertie to Lascelles, 28 Sept. 1904, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/12.

48. Steiner, pp.66-69. Sanderson to Lascelles, 3 Jan. 1905, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/12.

ill during the summer of 1904 Bertie was summoned to London to temporarily replace him. This and the prospect of the early retirement of the permanent under-secretary allowed Bertie the opportunity to seek out a suitable successor. He shared the contempt which several of his colleagues felt towards Charles Villiers, the most senior of the assistant under-secretaries, whom Sanderson had selected as his heir.⁴⁹ Instead, in November Bertie proposed to the prime minister, Arthur Balfour, that Hardinge might eventually have the permanent under-secretaryship. If Hardinge could not be spared for the moment, then Bertie thought that Arthur Godley of the India Office might temporarily have the post. Sanderson, however, was determined to resume his duties and, despite the opposition of his medical advisers, returned to the Foreign Office in December 1904.⁵⁰ Moreover, when the subject of Hardinge's promotion was raised again in the summer of 1905 Bertie had to intervene with his colleague in order to persuade him to put aside his doubts about the financial difficulties in which acceptance of the post might involve him.⁵¹

49. Hardinge considered it a 'public misfortune' that Bertie was not to remain long in Sanderson's position. Hardinge to Bertie, 28 Sept. 1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176. Hardinge to Bertie, 21 Feb. 1904; Bertie to Mallet, 29 June 1904; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183. Chirol to Hardinge, 18 Oct. 1904. Hardinge MSS., 7.

50. Already in the spring of 1904 Bertie had informed Knollys that he would prefer to have Hardinge as Sanderson's successor. But in August 1904 Valentine Chirol of The Times noted that Bertie 'might not be unwilling to come back to the F.O. when (Lamps (Sanderson) retires, if he does not get Paris-so sick does he profess to be of being abroad'. Bertie to Knollys, 29 March 1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Chirol to Hardinge, 10 Aug. and 18 Oct. 1904; Bertie to Hardinge, 28 Nov. 1904; Maxwell to Hardinge, 28 Nov. 1904; Knollys to Hardinge 11 Jan. 1905; Hardinge MSS., 7.

51. Hardinge to Bertie, 21 July 1905, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183. Mallet to Bertie, (?) October 1905, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184. Hardinge to Bertie, 16 July 1905. Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163. Bertie to Hardinge, 5 July and 25 July 1905, Hardinge MSS., 7.

By the time of Hardinge's transfer to London, Bertie had already been at the Embassy in the Faubourg St.Honore for more than a year. There his abrupt methods were not in the first instance easily understood by French politicians, and only slowly did he win their sympathy and respect.⁵² Although he spurned the idea of self-advertisement in the press, he was punctilious of etiquette and maintained great state at the embassy. Nearly one fifth of his annual allowance for the post was spent on his stables, and on full dress occasions he would drive from the embassy to neighbouring Elysee palace in a sumptuous coach, resplendent with silver fittings and embroideries, and bearing his personal coat-of-arms writ large.⁵³ 'He made one feel', Vansittart observed, 'that the finest thing in the world was to be His Majesty's Britannic Ambassador in Paris'.⁵⁴

The role which Bertie sought to play was matched by his picturesque appearance. His white curly hair and fine moustache offset a ruddy complexion, and though short in stature he made up for this by invariably wearing an exceptionally high top-hat: the 'only one', commented a naval attache of the embassy, 'to call forth a salute from the democratic police of Paris'.⁵⁵ To Caillaux, he seemed like a character who had stepped out of a novel by Thackeray or Dickens; head held high, 'stick en bataille, la moustache au vent...saussissonné dans des jaquettes ou dans des vestons trop ajustés, portant la large cravate lavallière bleue à pois blancs'.⁵⁶

52. The Times, 27 Sept.1919, 8,1.

53. Ibid. Bertie thoroughly disapproved of the idea of diplomats allowing their views to be broadcast in the press. He even refused to allow a caricature to be drawn of himself for publication in The World as a 'Parisian Personality'. Bertie to Grey, 21 Feb.1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Dawbarn to Bertie 10 June 1910; Bertie to Dawbarn, 16 June 1910; Bertie to Tyrell, 16 June 1910; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186.

54. Vansittart, 54.

55. 'Journal as Naval Attache, Feb 16,1911 to March 16,1914' 3, Kelly MSS., Kel/3. N.Henderson, Water Under ^{the} Bridges, (London 1945)p.83.

56. Caillaux, ii, 134.

But by contrast, his wife, Lady Feodorowna, appears not to have cut an impressive figure in French society. Those who knew her well found her both kind and humourous, but she had a shy manner and was inclined to be somewhat vague.⁵⁷ She did not, despite her long association with diplomacy, enjoy acting the part of hostess and, according to one account, 'used to count the minutes until all the guests had gone'.⁵⁸ Indeed, Sir Frederick Ponsonby, who dined at the embassy during the royal visit to Paris in 1914, found that she knew none of the diplomatic corps by sight. She was, he concluded, 'quite impossible as Ambassadress'.⁵⁹

Both the aristocratic society of the 'faubourg' and the official republican 'set' were entertained by Bertie at the embassy.⁶⁰ Moreover, King Edward, whose journeys to the south of France took him through Paris, was a regular but not always welcome guest. His refusal, for instance, to abandon his plan to arrive in Paris on May Day in 1907 was especially embarrassing for Bertie. It meant that the prefect of police was faced with the double problem of handling the traditional left wing

57. E. Cadogan, Before the Deluge: Memories and Reflections, 1880-1914 (London, 1961), p.142. N. Henderson, op cit.

58. 'Journal as Naval Attaché', Kelly MSS., op cit.

59. Frederick Ponsonby was an assistant private secretary to King George V. Ponsonby to Hardinge, 28 April 1914, Hardinge MSS., 105.

60. Bertie was not, however, without enemies in Parisian society. The rift between the aristocracy and the governmental 'set' which was re-opened by the political quarrel over the separation of the church and state provided fertile ground for some to say that Bertie was favouring one side against the other in his entertainments. The accusation was also made that Bertie did not entertain enough. But in a letter written in Bertie's defence, Hardinge informed the king on 24 April 1907 that Bertie had recently issued 1000 invitations to a party at the embassy and was about to send out another 2000 for a party in May. Bertie to Hardinge, 23 April 1907; Hardinge to Bertie, 9 May 1907; Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/185. Hardinge to Edward VII, 24 April 1907, Hardinge MSS., 9.

demonstrations and ensuring the king's safety, and as such it attracted adverse criticism of England in the French press.⁶¹ Of the French politicians with whom Bertie was to become acquainted Georges Clemenceau, a man of not dissimilar temperament, was the one with whom he enjoyed the closest relations.⁶² He was also very friendly with the Baron Jacques de Gunzburg, a banker of German and Russian origin, who proved to be a useful source of information where matters affecting international finance were concerned. At weekends Bertie frequently stayed at his house at Dieppe, near to which town he possessed a stretch of a trout stream.⁶³

61. S. Lee, King Edward VII (2 vols., London, 1927), ii, 544-545. Ponsonby to Bertie, 25 April 1907; Bertie to Hardinge, 27 April 1907; Hardinge to Bertie, 27 and 30 April 1907; Bertie to Grey, 3 May 1907; Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/185. Bertie to Hardinge, 26 and 29 April 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. In January 1907 the king had requested Bertie to vacate the embassy so that he and the queen might stay there during a private visit to Paris. 'I know', Hardinge wrote to Bertie, 'you will curse and swear at being turned out, but it is inevitable and I advise you to accept the idea with enthusiasm'. Hardinge to Bertie, 20 Jan.1907 (2 letters), Bertie MSS.,A, F.O. 800/164.

62. Georges Clemenceau entered office as minister of the interior in Sarrien's government of 1906. He succeeded Sarrien in October 1906 and remained president of the council until June 1909. He was premier again from November 1917 until January 1920. Bertie wrote of him in January 1918 'he is straight and that is a quality which is not a common one in France and he is as pro-British as any honest Frenchman can be'. Bertie to Lloyd George, 16 Jan.1918, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/169. It is interesting to note that in a recent character sketch of Clemenceau Theodore Zeldin has observed that he 'was more a bull than a tiger'. T. Zeldin, France 1848-1945, vol. i (Oxford, 1973), p.702.

63. Bertie to Drummond, 3 June 1916, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/190. Bertie to Hardinge, 10 march 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/191. Murray of Elibank to Lloyd George, 31 July 1914, Lloyd George MSS., C/6/5/18. S. Pakenham, Sixty Miles from England: the English at Dieppe, 1814-1914, (London, 1967), p.216. J.E. Blanche, Portraits of a Lifetime: The late Victorian Era. The Edwardian Era. The Edwardian Pageant, 1870-1914 (London, 1937), pp.282-283.

Apart from fishing and some shooting, Bertie appears to have enjoyed few other recreational pursuits, and he displayed a singular lack of interest in literature and the arts in general. Sir Schomberg McDonnell, an official of the Office of Works, told the Australian journalist, George Morrison, that Bertie was an 'ignorant man who had never read a book since he left Eton, "his chief claim being as a retailer of lewd stories in coarse English".⁶⁴ His treatment in January 1906 of a visiting choir and orchestra from the Royal College of Music led their conductor, Sir Charles Stamford, to complain bitterly on his return to London. Not only had the ambassador left his box in the middle of a concert, but, according to Stamford had addressed him as if he were a 'crossing sweeper'.⁶⁵ Indeed, Bertie had little sympathy with cultural exchanges or for that matter with anything that tended to upset the daily routine of the embassy. He was quite relieved when it was decided in the spring of 1906 not to send the band of the Grenadier Guards to Paris, for, as he commented, 'there had been too much of the musical entente'.⁶⁶

64. Cyril Pearl, p.161. Bertie was quite partial to scandal. After a visit from Bertie in November 1917, Maurice Hankey noted: 'He also, as usual, told me much scandal about relations between Briand and various ladies'. Diary, 2 Nov.1917, Hankey MSS, HNKY; 1/4. Vansittart op.cit.

65. In a defence of his action, Bertie subsequently wrote that he thought Stamford 'to suffer from wind in the head and not to be a person with any sense of proportion'. Bertie to Knollys, 29 Jan.1906; Bertie to Mallet, 29 Jan.1906; Stamford to Sir Walter Parrot, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184.

66. Bertie to Mallet 25 March 1906; Bertie to Gorst, 23 July 1906; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. On the subject of official visits Bertie wrote in November 1912: 'Could not the Government guillotine them? I was instrumental at Rome by example in the eventual abolition of the Ricevimento there'. Bertie to Nicolson, 17 Nov.1912. Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187.

While at Paris Bertie proved himself to be a jealous guardian of the privileges of his office. He offered few favours, and was impatient with those who sought them; an attitude of mind which did not always endear him to English visitors to Paris.⁶⁷ At the same time he did not limit the advice which he offered to his colleagues in London to matters relating strictly to Anglo-French relations. His previous experience had equipped him with sufficient knowledge to enable him to engage in debates on issues effecting Africa and the Mediterranean, and Britain's relations with Germany and Russia. He was even prepared to lecture the permanent under-secretaries on such improvements as they might make in the running of their office.

The task, however, of representing Britain at Paris in a period of intense diplomatic activity was itself a formidable one. Fortunately Bertie had a robust constitution, and not until 1917 did his health begin to fail. An attack of eczema and psoriasis, which rendered him 'like a boiled lobster', compelled him during July 1910 to seek a cure at La Bourboule, but he was soon bored with the place, and quickly returned to Paris.⁶⁹ He was, in fact, rarely absent from his post for

67. Bertie was particularly upset by the misuse of the diplomatic bag for the despatch of goods for private individuals. It was also typical of him that he should have insisted in January 1908 that Campbell-Bannerman, the prime minister, should meet the French foreign minister at the embassy rather than at a private party to which he had been invited. Bertie to Campbell-Bannerman, 9 Jan.1908; Bertie to Knollys, 9 Jan.1908; Bertie to Hardinge, 9 Jan.1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/166. Eyre Crowe to Grahame, 2 Jan.1912; Bertie to Eyre Crowe, 6 Jan.1912; Bertie to Mallet, 11 Jan.1912; Mallet to Bertie, 12 Jan.1912; Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/187. One gentleman who was very upset by the way in which Bertie treated him was Lord Esher. See: R.S. Churchill, Lord Derby, 'King of Lancashire' (London, 1958), p. 358.

68. Rennell Rodd, iii, 41.

69. Bertie to Hardinge, 9 July 1910, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186.

any long period. Moreover, during his first three years in France he was able to rely upon the capable assistance of Reginald Lister, who had already served him at Rome. Aware of Lister's acquaintance with French society, Bertie was instrumental in securing his appointment as councillor at Paris in March 1905, and he remained there until he became minister at Tangier in October 1908.⁷⁰

Less than three months after the conclusion of the convention which gave birth to the Anglo-French entente, Mallet observed to Bertie: 'The next Ambassador to France will have a great role to play'.⁷¹ Yet it is doubtful if he could have foreseen the crisis over Morocco with which Bertie was to become involved during the spring of 1905. At the time of his appointment Bertie was more aware of the strains placed upon Anglo-French relations by the war in the Far East than of the way in which the entente might develop in the course of the following twelve months.⁷²

70. Maurice de Bunsen was the first secretary at the Paris embassy when Bertie was appointed. But in February 1905 Bertie learned that he was to become minister at Lisbon. Bertie was anxious that he should not be succeeded by Alan Johnstone, the first secretary of Vienna, whom he personally disliked. On the other hand he considered Lister to be particularly suitable for Paris. 'He knows', Bertie observed, 'almost everybody official and non-official and is universally liked'. He knows Paris and French politics well and he is full of tact'. Bertie to Mallet, 10 Feb. and 24 Feb. 1905; Bertie to Hardinge, 24 Feb. 1905; Bertie MSS., B. F.O.800/183. Lister died of consumption in 1912 while he was still minister at Tangier.

71. Mallet to Bertie, 2 June 1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

72. Bertie had, however, forecast that the agreement with France would result in difficulties with the other great powers. On the day before the conclusion of the Anglo-French accord he warned Lansdowne: 'Germany, Austria, Russia and Italy will all expect to be well paid though their respective interests in the matters settled with France may be small and not damaged'. Bertie to Lansdowne, 7 April 1904, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/133.

Chapter I.

The German challenge in Morocco.

The convention which the governments of Great Britain and France had concluded in April 1904 offered a solution to most of the outstanding colonial disputes between the two powers. Yet in the wake of the victories achieved by Japan over France's ally, Russia, their new found friendship might easily have withered. That it did not was due largely to the German decision to effect in Morocco what appeared in London and Paris to be a challenge to the entente. Naval rivalry and a recriminatory press campaign on both sides of the North Sea had already brought Anglo-German relations to a low ebb by the commencement of 1905.¹ Bertie, however, felt that Britain could afford to treat German 'threats and blandishments' with 'becoming contempt'.² Unable to take advantage of the difficulties which had kept Britain and France apart in Egypt and elsewhere, the German government would in future have less opportunity for constructing continental coalitions. Evidently with this in mind, Bertie strove during his first year at Paris to maintain British and French confidence in their mutual understanding. While Theophile Delcasse, the minister who had guided France towards the accord with England, remained at the Quai d'Orsay, this was not a difficult task.³ But after his resignation in June 1905, Bertie had not only to shore up his successor against German demands, but also to help to re-establish the faith of Lansdowne and his colleagues in the steadfastness of France.

1. Monger, pp.175-178. J.Steinberg, 'The Copenhagen Complex', Journal of Contemporary History, 1(1966), 23-46.

2. Bertie to Mallet, 20 Jan.1905, Bertie MSS., A. F.O.800/170.

3. Theophile Delcasse was French foreign minister from 1898 until June 1905. He returned to office again in 1911 as minister of marine, and from 1913 until 1914 he was French ambassador at St.Petersburg.

During the brief period in which Bertie had occupied Sanderson's position at the Foreign Office much of his time had been taken up with matters relating to the war in the Far East. He seems to have viewed the course of that conflict with a sense of general satisfaction, and so long as it continued he gave no encouragement to Delcasse's hopes of achieving an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. Unlike Hardinge, Bertie never exhibited any love for Russia, and he placed little trust in her diplomacy. In response to a plea by Delcasse that if France, Britain, and Russia acted together 'peace would have a long reign', Bertie observed

...that at St. Petersburg agreements were not interpreted in the same way as they would be in London or Paris, at one moment assurances given by the Emperor of Russia were not to be considered those of the Russian Government and vice versa.⁴

This response pleased Lansdowne. While he did not consider an Anglo-Russian understanding to be impossible, he wrote to Bertie on 19 January that the 'Russian diplomatic currency has become debased and discredited and it will not be easy to restore its face value'.⁵

The attitude of both Bertie and Lansdowne towards Russia was no doubt influenced by the crisis which had resulted in the autumn of 1904 from the Dogger Bank incident.⁶ But that was

4. Bertie to Lansdowne, 17 Jan. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176.

5. Lansdowne to Bertie, 19 Jan. 1905, ibid.

6. Yet Bertie attributed the Russian attack on the Hull fishing vessels to a warning from the German emperor to Nicholas I about Japanese activities in the North Sea. Monger, pp.172-175. Bertie seems to have been convinced that the German emperor was determined to use the situation in the Far East in order to foment trouble between his neighbours in Europe. On the eve of his departure for Paris Bertie informed Paul Cambon that William II had encouraged the Japanese to attack Russia. P.Cambon to Delcasse, 12 Jan. 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no.22.

not the only international complication to which the war gave rise. It was also possible that Japan's successes and the consequent weakening of Russia might lead to a diplomatic re-alignment in Europe. Reports that the Germans were trying to better their relations with Russia contributed to the estrangement of Britain and Germany.⁷ Then during January 1905 the prospect was raised in the Foreign Office of the re-emergence of a Far Eastern triplice, such as that which had intervened in the Sino-Japanese dispute some ten years before. Cecil Spring-Rice, the first secretary of the British Embassy at St. Petersburg, was convinced that the German Emperor was concocting with France some 'pleasant surprise' for England with regard to peace terms. Moreover, it seemed not improbable to Lansdowne that the French Government might have discussed, if not with Russia, perhaps with Germany, what conditions of peace might be accepted by the powers.⁸

It was important in the foreign secretary's view that the French should not commit themselves without previous consultation with Britain to 'even hypothetical arrangements which might or might not be made in certain eventualities'. Thus before his departure for France Bertie was instructed by Lansdowne to find out if anything were going on in Paris with regard to peace terms.⁹ Bertie did not, however, share his

7. Both William II and Holstein in the German foreign ministry saw the Dogger Bank incident as an opportunity to win Russian friendship and to obstruct progress towards a rapprochement between Britain and Russia. N. Rich, Friedrich von Holstein. Politics and Diplomacy in the Era of Bismarck and Wilhelm II, (2 vols., Cambridge, 1965), ii, 688-691.

8. Mallet to Bertie, 17 Jan. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Cecil A. Spring-Rice was first secretary at St. Petersburg from 1903 until 1906. He was subsequently British Minister at Tehran.

9. Lansdowne to Bertie, 19 Jan. 1905 op.cit.

colleagues' fears about French intentions. He warned Lansdowne that the 'Yellow Peril was the order of the day' in Paris, but he limited himself to making no more than a general enquiry of Delcassé about whether he knew of any movements or pourparlers for peace.¹⁰ When Mallet subsequently protested to him that this was not what Lansdowne had in mind, Bertie assured him that while the German emperor would no doubt like to confront the 'Yellow Peril' with Russia and France as partners, he did not think the French would 'play the game over again'.¹¹

Bertie did, however, make one suggestion with regard to how Britain might deprive the French of an excuse for joining with Russia and Germany in a coalition against Japan. Since Paul Cambon and Camille Barrère, the French ambassadors at London and Rome, and several other prominent Frenchmen had recently professed to fear a Japanese attack upon France's possessions in Indo-China, Bertie proposed to Lansdowne that they might be offered a 'reinsurance treaty à la Bismarck'. He thought that the British Government might guarantee France's possessions against Japanese attack, and that Japan could be informed of, or even brought into, this arrangement. But Lansdowne was not tempted by this proposal. He dismissed the

10. During January 1905 both the Temps and the Écho de Paris published articles which referred to the possibility of a Japanese invasion of French Indo-China. It was a theme which the French colonial press continued to dwell upon. Bertie to Lansdowne, 16 Jan. and 17 Jan. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176. De Bunsen to Lansdowne, 10 Jan., 11 Jan. and 12 Jan. 1905; F.O.27/3705, despt. nos. 7, 9 and 11. Bertie to Lansdowne, 13 Jan, 17 Jan, 13 Feb, and 17 Feb. 1905; F.O.27/3705, despt. nos. 16, 22a, 54 and 62.

11. Mallet to Bertie, 17 Jan. 1905; and Bertie to Mallet, 20 Jan. 1905, op.cit. On 24 January Bertie re-assured Lansdowne that reports that Delcassé had been in communication with the German emperor with regard to peace terms seemed so far as he could judge to be untrue. Bertie to Lansdowne, 24 Jan. 1905, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183.

'Yellow Peril' scare as absurd, and the matter was allowed to drop.¹²

At this stage Bertie seems to have regarded international politics almost entirely from the point of view of Britain's global interests. He was certainly less pessimistic than Delcassé was about the effects of Russia's losses upon the continental balance of power. Germany was, as he had pointed out in the previous year, a power with which Britain might successfully cope so long as she was not united with another great naval power. Japan's naval victories, and the entente with France lessened the chances of Germany achieving such an alliance. Thus, when after the battle of Mukden Delcassé put it to Bertie that it seemed in the 'interests of England as well as France that Russia should remain a great European power', and that the war should be terminated for otherwise 'another state might become too powerful', he received an answer that was hardly encouraging. Although Bertie assented to his conclusions, he warned him that it was not in the interests of England that 'Russia should be the Dictator of the Far East or the Protector of Constantinople'.¹³

12. Bertie to Lansdowne, 17 Jan. 1905, no. 22a op.cit.
Lansdowne to Bertie, 19 Jan. 1905, op.cit. Paul Cambon was French ambassador at London from 1898 until 1920. Camille Barrère was French ambassador at Rome from 1897 until 1924.

13. Bertie to Lansdowne, 15 March 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O. 800/126. As early as March 1901, Bertie had forecasted that a Japanese victory over Russia would be of advantage to Britain. Russia, he thought, would be able to prepare for another war in the distant future, and Japan's possession of the Liaotung peninsula^x would be a guarantee against a Russo-Japanese reconciliation. 'The Yellow danger', he concluded, 'would be kept in check by Russia and the Russian danger by Japan'. Memorandum by Bertie, 11 March 1901, B.D., ii, no. 54. The strains placed upon the Franco-Russian alliance by Russia's war with Japan have been dealt with from the point of view of financial relations in James Long, 'Franco-Russian Relations during the Russo-Japanese War', The Slavonic and East European Review, lii (1964), 213-233.

All that Bertie had to suggest with regard to achieving peace between Russia and Japan was that the German emperor might play the role of peacemaker. He put it to Lansdowne that they should utilise his vanity in order to bring him to sound both combatants as to whether they had not had enough, 'he being the friend of both, whereas France and England are biassed by their alliances'.¹⁴ Perhaps Bertie hoped that the emperor might as honest broker succeed in embroiling himself in difficulties with both parties. Nevertheless, whatever his object, Lansdowne did 'not take very kindly' to the idea. 'We may', he contended, 'safely trust His Majesty to take the initiative if he saw an opportunity of doing so for his own advantage, but I should distrust his intervention'.¹⁵

If Bertie felt little sympathy with Delcassé's concern over his ally's losses, he, nevertheless, from the outset of his embassy at Paris, tried to ensure that the British government should have no dealings with Germany that might be taken amiss in France. The news which reached his naval attaché in March that the Admiralty were planning British naval visits to Brest and Kiel led Bertie to urge the foreign secretary that the visit to Brest should not only precede that to Kiel, but that it should be more numerous as well. 'The French' he claimed, 'might otherwise be disappointed and make comparisons'. While however, Delcassé was delighted with the British proposal for a visit to Brest and an invitation to the French navy to pay a complementary visit to Spithead in August, he was anything but anxious to advertize the news of this exchange. Having recently learned of the German emperor's decision to visit Tangier,

14. Bertie to Lansdowne, 15 March 1905, ibid.

15. Lansdowne to Bertie, 21 March 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

he told Bertie on 24 March that any announcement about the British fleet going to Brest might be treated in some quarters as a contre-coup to German policy.¹⁶

The announcement on 19 March of the German emperor's intention to land at Tangier raised the whole subject of the future of Morocco and France's aspirations there. It was also of obvious significance for Anglo-French relations since in April 1904 the British government had promised their diplomatic support for the acquisition by France of what would amount to a protectorate over the greater part of the Shereefian empire. Moreover, an agreement concluded by France with Spain, and communicated to Britain in October 1904 also provided for the division of Morocco into French and Spanish zones of influence. Thus assured of the virtual acquiescence of London and Madrid, Delcassé had in January 1905 despatched a mission to Fez to begin negotiations with the sultan which seemed destined to reduce his realm to the status of a French dependency.¹⁷

Irritated by the French government's neglect of them, and worried by the implications of the Anglo-French entente, the authorities at Berlin endeavoured in the autumn of 1904 to

16. Bertie to Lansdowne, 13 March and 24 March 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Alston to Bertie, 21 March, 1905; Bertie to Lansdowne, 28 March, 1905; F.O.27/3705, despt. nos. 126 and 108. Delcassé to Cambon, 28 March 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no.200. G.M.Paléologue, The Turning Point: three critical years, 1904-1906, (English ed., London 1935), p.210.

17. Cambon to Lansdowne, 6 Oct.1905; and 'Convention between France and Spain signed at Paris October 3, 1904; B.D.iii, nos.58 and 59. For an account of the part played by Lansdowne in the Franco-Spanish negotiations see Lyle A.Mcgeoch, 'British Foreign Policy and the Spanish Corollary to the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904', in N.Barker and M.L.Brown Jnr., Diplomacy in the Age of Nationalism, (The Hague,1971), pp.208-222. C.Andrew, pp.216-228 and 264-267. The only comprehensive published work on the first Moroccan crisis remains Eugene N. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis (Chicago,1930).

better their relations with Russia.¹⁸ But their inability to detach Russia from France, and the apparent success of Delcassé's diplomacy, led Bülow to take up the proposal of Friedrich von Holstein, the head of the political section of the Wilhelmstrasse, for a counter-offensive in Morocco. The sultan was encouraged to resist French pressure for reform, and on 31 March the Emperor William declared at the German legation at Tangier that his government considered Morocco to be an independent state and would not tolerate another power establishing its supremacy there.¹⁹

In Holstein's view the legal and diplomatic position which Germany occupied was sufficiently strong to allow her to press for an international conference on Morocco. He hoped that Germany's insistence upon the maintenance of the 'open door' in Morocco would win for her the support of the United States, that this would restrain Britain, and that Italy and Spain could be kept in line. Germany might thereby frustrate France's designs, discredit the entente, and perhaps secure in Morocco some kind of Franco-German mandate.²⁰

Not without good reason Delcassé was uneasy about what might be Germany's intentions with regard to Morocco, and on 22 and 24 March he expressed to Bertie his dismay over the recent turn of events. Nevertheless, the British ambassador could offer him little comfort. He from the first, viewed the new situation almost entirely in terms of a German effort to exploit the weakening of France's eastern ally in order to secure some concession in Morocco. The German government,

18. N.Rich, pp.689-691.

19. Ibid., pp.692-695. For a recent study of German policy toward Morocco see: P.Guillen, L'Allemagne et le Maroc de 1870 à 1905, (Paris, 1967), especially chapter xviii, pp.813-881.

20. N.Rich, pp.696-702.

he told Delcasse, might be seeking some 'price' for the recognition of France's arrangements with Britain and Spain.²¹ What he thought that price would be, he made clear in a letter to Mallet of 31 March. 'Of course', he wrote, 'the Germans would like a coaling station on the Atlantic coast. That would not suit us'.²² It was a view which was supported by Sanderson, who reminded Bertie that Count Hatzfeldt, the former German ambassador at London, had tried to persuade Salisbury to admit that Britain would not object to Germany acquiring such a port.²³

Bertie was not personally impressed by the imperial escapade at Tangier. It was, he thought, bluff, and William II a 'good Commis Voyageur' trading on the Moorish sultan's hopes of support in return for some commercial and other advantage.²⁴ The French, he believed, were not inclined to go beyond their previous assurances to respect the commercial rights of neutrals.

21. Bertie to Lansdowne, 22 March 1905, B.D., iii, no.67. Bertie to Lansdowne, 24 March and 31 March 1905, nos.106a and 113a, F.O.27/3705. Bertie to Lansdowne, 22 March, 24 March and 31 March 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.
22. Bertie to Mallet, 31 March 1905, Bertie MSS., F.O.800/170. One of the most consistent elements in Bertie's thinking about German policy was his belief that Germany was seeking after coaling stations and naval bases. He probably derived this impression from the German seizure of Kiao-Chow in November 1897 and the steady growth of their navy. According, however, to a recent study of Germany's naval war plans the German naval staff did not view with favour the acquisition of such bases. In Tirpitz's view all warships sent overseas merely weakened his basic North Sea strategy. P.M.Kennedy, 'The Development of German naval operations plans against England, 1896-1914', English Historical Review, lxxxix (1974), 72-73.
23. Sanderson to Bertie, 4 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Paul Cambon also told Bertie on 30 April that two years before Germany had tried to obtain a coaling depot from the sultan close to Morocco's Algerian frontier. Bertie to Lansdowne, 30 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.
24. Bertie to Mallet, 12 April 1905. Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

Indeed, he saw real advantage for Britain in a row between France and Germany. On the day of the emperor's visit to Tangier, he explained to Mallet:

I hope that we shall not do anything to smooth matters between the French and German Governments. If we advised the French to make concessions they would be furious...Let Morocco be an open sore between France and Germany as Egypt was between France and ourselves.²⁵

For the moment Bertie could find no inclination on the part of the French to initiate conversations with the Germans on Morocco.²⁶ His confidence in the French Government was not, however, fully shared by Mallet. Though much impressed by the favourable position which he thought Britain had acquired as the result of the entente, he supposed that there was 'some danger of the French becoming suspicious and making terms with Germany'.²⁷

This prospect does not seem to have disturbed Lansdowne. But unlike Bertie he did not initially consider that the objective of German diplomacy was simply the acquisition of a concession in Morocco. Instead, he seems to have interpreted the emperor's visit as part and parcel of an attempt to undermine the Anglo-French understanding. It could not, he thought, be regarded as an isolated incident. To Sir Frank Lascelles, the British ambassador at Berlin, he wrote on 9 April; 'There can be no doubt that the Emperor was much annoyed by the Anglo-French Agreement and probably even more so by our refusal to vamp up some Agreement of the same kind with Germany over the Egyptian question'. The German government appeared to be bent upon intervening in the negotiations then progressing between

25: Bertie to Mallet, 31 March 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

26: Bertie to Mallet, 12 April 1905, op.cit.

27: Mallet to Bertie, 13 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

Britain, France, and Italy for an agreement on their interests in Abyssinia, and the same influences, Lansdowne thought, might soon be at work in Siam. He had little doubt that the emperor would avail himself of 'every opportunity to put spokes in our wheels'.²⁸

The refusal of the German government to engage in any separate discussions with the French on Morocco did not help either the foreign secretary or his officials to obtain a clearer understanding of their intentions. When, however, on 11 April Nicolson reported from Madrid that his German colleague was seeking Spanish consent for an international conference, both Balfour and Lansdowne decided to support the French in opposition to the idea. The Germans, Balfour minuted, 'are making themselves quite impossible'.²⁹

German diplomacy was viewed in a somewhat different light in Paris. There Delcasse was subject to increasing criticism from those who held that his initial neglect of Germany was responsible for the present difficulties. On 19 April he had to face a violent attack upon his policies in parliament, where his methods were far from popular. First Jaurès, and then Deschanel demanded that he should enter into direct negotiations with Germany without delay. Moreover, when Maurice Rouvier, the president of the council, intervened to defend the foreign minister, he declared that he would assume full responsibility for his policies.³⁰ Dissatisfied with

28. Lansdowne to Lascelles, 9 April 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/130, cited in part in Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne (London, 1929), p.334. Frank C. Lascelles was British Ambassador at Berlin from 1895 until his retirement in 1908.

29. Nicolson to Lansdowne, 11 April 1905, and minutes by Lansdowne and Balfour, F.O.99/434, tel.19.

30. Lister to Lansdowne, 20 April 1905; and 21 April 1905; F.O.27/3705, despt. nos.142 and 145. Lister to Lansdowne, 19 April 1905, F.O.27/3705, tel.19. Pierre Maurice Rouvier was French minister of finance from 1902 until 1905. He succeeded Emile Combes as president of the council and after Delcasse's resignation in June 1905 he also assumed responsibility for France's foreign policy.

this assurance, which implied that the French cabinet would in future exercise greater supervision over his policy, on 20 April Delcasse offered to resign. When two days later he withdrew this offer, he did so only on condition that a communiqué was issued which made it clear that he had the backing of the whole cabinet.³¹

Bertie was on leave in London when he learned of Delcasse's offer to resign, and his first reaction was to return quickly to France on 21 April. The claim, which was subsequently made by Count Khevenhüller, the Austrian ambassador at Paris, that Bertie was sent back by his government in order to intervene with the French president in Delcasse's favour is not substantiated by any document in Bertie's correspondence.³² Nevertheless, Bertie was aware of the weakness of Delcasse's position within the council of ministers. After a meeting with Delcasse on 22 April he wrote to Lansdowne that he thought that the foreign minister's insistence on a declaration of solidarity by the French cabinet was 'not only for foreign consumption but because one or more of his colleagues were thought not to be with him in the Moroccan question policy'. Most notable amongst these was Eugene Etienne, the minister of the interior and de facto leader of the colonial party, who Bertie observed, was 'credited with the desire to step

31. C.Andrew, pp.276-277. P. Cambon to H.Cambon, 29 April 1905, Correspondence, ii, 186-191. For a thorough examination of the pressure brought to bear upon Delcasse by Rouvier and his other colleagues see P. Muret, 'La politique personnelle de Rouvier et la chute de Delcassé (31 mars - 6 juin, 1905)', Revue d'histoire de la Guerre Mondiale, xvii(1939), 209-281 and 305-352.

32. Radolin to Bülow. 25 April 1905, G.P., xx pt.2, no.6847. The Count zu Khevenhüller-Metsch was the ambassador of Austria-Hungary at Paris from 1903 until 1911. Bertie succeeded him as doyen of the diplomatic corps.

into his (Delcassé's) shoes'.³³

The possibility of a change at the Quai d'Orsay disturbed Bertie, and he warned Delcassé that in the present situation his departure would be a disaster. Not only would his successor probably be prepared to pursue a more conciliatory policy towards Germany, but it would also be treated as a victory by the Wilhelmstrasse. Delcassé, himself, asserted that the Germans were 'trying to turn him out', and from a 'reliable source', Bertie learned that Count Monts, the German ambassador at Rome, had declared, 'nous réussirons à nous débarrasser de Delcassé et ensuite nous n'aurions pas de difficulté de détruire ses arrangements'.³⁴

In these circumstances it is possible that Bertie may in an effort to steel Delcassé against German pressure on the entente, have encouraged him to believe that he might rely on more than just diplomatic support from Britain. At any rate Maurice Paleologue, a sous-directeur of the foreign ministry, told the French ambassador at Berlin on 23 April that the British government had informed Delcassé 'that in the present crisis Germany's success would mean nothing less than admission

33. Bertie to Lansdowne, 22 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Lister has already warned Lansdowne that Delcassé's position in the French cabinet was rendered more critical by the presence in it of a powerful rival in the person of Etienne. Lister to Lansdowne, 21 April 1905, no.145, F.O.27/3405. According to Radolin, the German ambassador at Paris, Etienne favoured an understanding between France and Germany. The Baron von Eckhardstein, who had recently been in Paris believed that both Etienne and Rouvier wished to rid themselves of Delcassé. Bülow to AA, 6 May 1905; Radolin to AA, 29 June 1905; G.P. xx, pt.2, nos. 6652 and 6751. On the development of the French colonial party and its ideas see C.Andrew and AsS.Kanya-Forstner, 'The French "Colonial Party": its composition, aims, and influence, 1885-1914', Historical Journal, xiv(1971), 99-128.

34. Bertie to Lansdowne, 22 April 1905 ibid. Bertie wrote to de Bunsen, who had recently become minister at Lisbon: 'I hope that Delcassé will weather the storm till things are settled, or more so than now - Germany is behaving as usual as the general mischief maker. The Emperor is furious at the Entente and will do all he can to break it'. Bertie to de Bunsen, 12 May 1905, cited in Dugdale, p.205.

of her supremacy and it is determined to oppose it'.³⁵

Meanwhile in London Mallet, who had always tended to regard the understanding with France as the basis of a future alliance tried to secure from Lansdowne a further pledge of support for France.³⁶ He had already on 20 April warned Balfour's private secretary that the Germans would probably demand a Moroccan port, and that they would succeed in demonstrating that the entente was valueless if Britain did not back up France.³⁷ On learning of Delcassé's proffered resignation, he wrote to the foreign secretary to say that 'things looked serious for the Entente', and he asked him 'what we should do supposing Germany pressed home her victory and asked for a port'. 'I urged him', Mallet observed to Bertie, 'to tell the French that we should see them through'. Lansdowne advised Mallet to consult the Admiralty, and as a result he visited Sir John Fisher, the first sea lord. According to a private letter which Mallet wrote to Bertie on

35. Paleologue, 229-230. C.Andrew, pp.285-286. Maurice Paleologue was subsequently French consul-general and, after 1909, minister at Sofia. In 1912 he succeeded Bapst as political director of the Quai d'Orsay, and from 1914 until 1917 he was French ambassador at St.Petersburg.

36. In June 1904 Mallet had written to Bertie: 'Entre nous, I do not think that Mr. Balfour at all realizes what may be expected from the Anglo-French understanding ...It seems to me that a close understanding with France is a great safeguard for us'. Mallet to Bertie, 2 June, 1904, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/170.

37. Mallet to Sanders, 20 April 1905; Mallet to Short, 6 May 1905, Balfour MSS., (B.M.) Add.49747.

24 April, Fisher said

..."of course the Germans will ask for Mogador and I shall tell Lord L. that if they do we must at least have Tangier - of course it's all rot and it would not matter to us whether the Germans got Mogador or not but I'm going to say so all the same".³⁸

Fisher informed Lansdowne that 'without any question the Germans would like a port on the coast of Morocco'. He added: 'This seems a golden opportunity for fighting the Germans in alliance with the French, so I earnestly hope you will be able to bring this about'.³⁹

It seems doubtful if Lansdowne could have taken seriously the bellicose tone of Fisher's note.⁴⁰ But he may also have recently been tacked by Bertie on the subject of a Moroccan port, for on the 19th he had written to Nicolson that he would not be surprised if Germany were 'to seek compensation in the shape of a coaling station'.⁴¹

38. Mallet to Bertie, 24 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. But the views expressed by Fisher on the dangers of a German port in Morocco also received support from Sir George Clarke, the secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence. He wrote to Balfour on 29 April: 'I think with Fisher that it would be a great nuisance to have a German fortified port on the Mogador coast, in the neighbourhood of our two great commercial routes'. After consulting the Admiralty reports on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, he concluded that the harbours which the 1904 agreement with France did not require to be unfortified (i.e. those on the Atlantic coast south of the Sebou river) were 'not naturally good'. Nevertheless, he again maintained that if the Germans acquired a fortified harbour at Mogador their cruisers could operate against British trade and it would be 'a very great nuisance'. Fisher supported this argument in a paper which he communicated to Balfour in July. He was, however, mainly concerned with that part of the Moroccan coast which the French had agreed should not be fortified. Clarke to Balfour, 29 April and 4 May 1905, Balfour MSS., (B.M.) Add.49701. 'Effects upon the Naval Situation of the Acquisition by Germany of Sea ports upon the Coast of Morocco', enclosed in Fisher to Balfour, 6 July 1905, Balfour MSS., (B.M.), Add.79711. Admiral Sir John Fisher was first sea lord from 1904 until 1910.

39. Fisher to Lansdowne, 22 April, 1905, P.J.Marder, Fear God and Dread Naught, (3 vols., London, 1952-54), i.55.

40. Lansdowne to Balfour, 23 April 1905 (incomplete draft of a letter), Balfour MSS., (B.M.), Add.49729.

41. Lansdowne to Nicolson, 19 April 1905, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/336.

Moreover, he was sufficiently worried about the prospect of the entente being discredited to inform Balfour by telegram on 23 April of the Admiralty's views, and to request permission to advise the French not to accede to German pressure for a port without giving Britain a full opportunity for conferring with them 'as to the manner in which demand might be met'.⁴² That same day, Easter Sunday, he had the unexpected opportunity to discuss this matter with the prime minister, and late that evening the following telegram was sent to Bertie:

It seems not unlikely that the German Government may ask for a port on the Moorish coast.

You are authorised to inform Minister for Foreign Affairs that we should be prepared to join French Government in offering strong opposition to such a proposal and to beg that if the question is raised French Government will afford us a full opportunity of conferring with them as to steps which might be taken in order to meet it.

German attitude in this dispute seems to be most unreasonable having regard to M. Delcassé's attitude and we desire to give him all the support we can.⁴³

This arrived at the embassy on the following morning.

As, however, the Monday after Easter was a public holiday in France and Delcassé was away in the country, Bertie could do no more than write to the foreign minister that he had received an important communication and would like to meet him.⁴⁴

Eugene Anderson had contended in his book The First Moroccan Crisis that when on 25 April Bertie finally delivered the message to Delcassé, he gave to it a 'form and meaning which was originally lacking'. This claim he based upon the difference in composition between the aide mémoire which Bertie

42. Lansdowne to Balfour, 23 April 1905, tel., Balfour MSS., (B.M.) Add.49729.

43. Lansdowne to Bertie, 22 April 1905, B.D., iii, no.90. Balfour surprised Lansdowne with a visit on 23 April. This accounts for Lansdowne's failure to finish his letter to Balfour of that date. Lansdowne to Balfour, 23 April 1905, op cit.

44. Bertie to Lansdowne, 25 April 1905, F.O.146/3842 (draft) despt. no.156. (The latter part of this despatch is published in B.D., iii, no.93). Bertie to Delcassé, 24 April 1905, Delcassé MSS., 14 (A.A.E.).

drafted and gave to the French foreign minister, and the above copy of Lansdowne's telegram, both of which were published in the British Documents on the Origins of the War. The telegram limited the British offer to join France in 'strong opposition' to Germany to the specific case where she could demand a Moroccan port, and it emphasized the importance of conferring beforehand. But Bertie's aide mémoire appeared to reverse the order of this document and began with the declaration that the British government

...trouve que les procédés de l'Allemagne dans la question du Maroc sont des plus déraisonnables vu l'attitude de Monsieur Delcassé et il désire accorder à Son Excellence tout l'appui en son pouvoir.

Thus, Anderson maintained, Delcassé was given what appeared to be a blanket offer of British support in which the German aspirations for a Moroccan port appeared as an example of when that offer might be applicable. Moreover, while Lansdowne had in his telegram sought only the opportunity for 'conferring' with the French government Bertie's aide mémoire asked Delcassé to give the British government 'toute occasion de concerter avec le Gouvernement Français'. The implication was that the French might expect some agreement to act together to result from the consultations which Lansdowne desired.⁴⁵

The assurances given by Bertie to Delcassé would seem then to have had a wider scope than those contained in Lansdowne's instructions. Nevertheless, the accusation made by Anderson, and since echoed by other historians, that

45. Aide-mémoire de l'ambassade de Grande Bretagne, 24 April 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no.347. E. Anderson, pp.210-211. The British Documents also contain a copy of a rough draft in Bertie's hand which would appear to have formed the basis of his aide mémoire. It is evident from this that Bertie had considered, and then discarded, the use of the verbs 'conférer' and 'discuter' before deciding to use 'concerter'. Draft by Bertie, 24 April 1905, B.D., iii no.91.

Bertie's aide mémoire was 'so colored by his own very pro-French feeling that it did not accurately reproduce his chief's proposal'.⁴⁶ The copy of Lansdowne's telegram upon which Anderson relied was found by the editors of the British Documents in the archives of the Paris embassy. As they rightly pointed out no copy of it is to be found in the general political correspondence of the Foreign Office. There is, however, in this collection a paraphrase of the telegram. Unlike the document in the embassy papers, which was dated 22 April, this bears the correct date of despatch (i.e. 23 April). Of more interest though is the fact that its composition is very similar to that employed by Bertie in his aide mémoire. It for instance begins:

German attitude in dispute with regard to Morocco seems to us most unreasonable having regard to the attitude of M. Delcassé, to whom we desire to give all possible support.

It is not improbable that German Govt. may ask for a Moorish port...

Indeed it seems likely that this formed the basis of Bertie's communication to Delcassé.⁴⁷

46. E. Anderson, ibid. C. Andrew, p.281. D.C. Watt, 'The First Morocco Crisis', in J.M. Roberts, Europe in the Twentieth Century (4 vols., London, 1970-1971), i, 91.

47. Lansdowne to Bertie, 23 April 1905, F.O. 27/3708, tel.61P.

It is interesting to note that in the draft of a despatch in Bertie recorded his interview with Delcassé on 25 April he at first referred to 'Your Lordship's tel. no. 61 dated the night of the 22nd'. He subsequently altered this to the 'night of the 23rd'. The editors of the British Documents, who only summarized this portion of the despatch, did not mention this alteration, but suggested that Bertie was referring to the date of the embassy's reception of Lansdowne's telegram. The only copy of this despatch is the draft in the embassy papers. Bertie to Lansdowne, 25 April 1905, op cit.

Bertie may of course have recognized the different interpretation that could be placed upon the paraphrase and have acted accordingly. But the existence of the two versions of Lansdowne's telegram also lends credence to the suggestion made by Bernadotte Schmitt in 1930 that Bertie changed the order of the sentences 'probably with the object of guarding the cipher'.⁴⁸ The ambassador could perhaps have decided to base his aide mémoire on the paraphrase with a view to preserving the secrecy of the cypher used in the original telegram. In any case it seems evident from a letter drafted by Lansdowne for Balfour on 23 April that the foreign secretary was as much concerned with the political situation in France and the future of the entente as he was with the prospect of a German port in Morocco.⁴⁹ On 24 April Mallet wrote to Bertie on the subject of Lansdowne's telegram: 'If the French are wise they will read between the lines and see that if we undertake as we are doing to back them up, we shall not be able to leave them in the lurch if Germany resorts to force'.⁵⁰ There were, however, considerable differences between Bertie's view of German diplomacy and those expressed by Mallet and Fisher. Unlike them he displayed no desire for a preventative war with Germany. Moreover, the prospect of Germany acquiring a Moroccan port was not for him simply a means by which to persuade Lansdowne to commit himself to further

48. B.E. Schmitt, The Coming of the War, 1914 (2 vols., London, 1930), i, 32-33.

49. In this draft of a letter Lansdowne referred to the 'bad mess' in which the French found themselves. He observed 'it is a bad thing that the Germans should have been able to discredit the 'Entente'. Lansdowne to Balfour, 23 April 1905, op cit.

50 Mallet to Bertie, 24 April 1905, Bertie MSS., F.O. 800/170.

support of France. He wanted to keep Delcassé in office, and to maintain the entente in order to bar the way to just such concessions to Germany.

Delcassé seems almost to have been surprised by Bertie's reference to a German demand for a Moroccan port, and he doubted if the sultan would be prepared to concede one. All that Bertie could tell the foreign minister was that he supposed the British Government 'must have received reliable information that a port was the aim of the German Emperor'.⁵¹ But Lansdowne was also uncertain about German aspirations. He doubted whether Mogador or Magazhan were 'worth much', although he informed Bertie that the 'establishment of a German station, no matter how insignificant at either of those places would have a very bad effect'.⁵²

During his meeting with Delcassé on 25 April Bertie found him to be 'much calmer' than before the debate in the chamber. He told Bertie that he believed everything should be done to show that the entente was a 'living force', and that same day he telegraphed to the French minister at Tangier that he and the British ambassador had recognised 'l'utilité de rendre bien apparente en toute occasion l'union étroite et fermée de la France et de l'Angleterre'.⁵³ Nevertheless, when eight days later Paul Cambon tried to secure from Lansdowne some clarification of Bertie's aide mémoire, he met with little success. The foreign secretary evaded his request to know what measures he envisaged in the event of Germany acquiring a port, and in reply advised him that they would have to wait until Germany uncovered herself.⁵⁴

51. Bertie to Lansdowne, 25 April 1905, B.D.iii, nos. 92 and 93.

52. Lansdowne to Bertie, 26 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

53. Bertie to Lansdowne, 25 April 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/127. Delcassé to Saint-René Taillandier, 25 April 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no. 350.

54. P. Cambon to Delcassé, 3 May 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no. 390.

Meanwhile, Bertie found that the general feeling in Paris was that the German emperor wanted to demonstrate to the French people that the entente was of little value to them, and that they had better come to terms with Germany.⁵⁵ Moreover, although Delcassé insisted that the German government had not yet given any sign of what they wanted, there were indications that a Franco-German colonial deal might be in view. On 30 April Paul Cambon suggested to Bertie that there were 'contiguous frontiers between France and Germany in Africa where compensation might have been found for Germany'.⁵⁶ Perhaps with this in mind, Bertie warned Lansdowne on 1 May:

If there are any points in Africa other than Morocco and Egypt where the French might throw bones to the German watchdog to guard to our detriment you ought to indicate I think to Cambon what concessions which we know the Germans want we should particularly object to, otherwise we might discover too late for remedy that our interests have been sacrificed.⁵⁷

Bertie might have been a good deal more worried by the prospect of a Franco-German accord if he had known that on 30 April Rouvier had indicated to Prince Radolin, the German ambassador at Paris, that their two countries might sign a convention similar to that which France had concluded with England. When he had previously been minister of finance, Rouvier had favoured co-operation with the Germans in the construction of the Bagdad railway.⁵⁸ On 1 May a confidant of his put it to Radolin that this, along with an agreement on central Africa and Morocco, might form part of a Franco German settlement.⁵⁹

55. Bertie to Lansdowne, 25 April 1905, B.D.iii, no.93.

56. Bertie to Lansdowne, 30 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

57. Bertie to Lansdowne, 1 May 1905, ibid.

58. Radolin to Bulow, 30 April 1905, G.P., xx pt.2, no.6647. Prince Hugo von Radolin was German ambassador at Paris from 1901 until 1910 when he was succeeded by the former German foreign secretary, von Schoen. For a short biographical sketch of Radolin see Maurice Baumont, 'Le Prince Radolin', in Mélanges Pierre Rénouvin, Etudes d'Histoire des Relations Internationales, (Paris, 1966), pp.169-176.

59. Radolin to Bulow, 1 May 1905, G.P. xx, pt.2, no.6645.

For its part the Quai d'Orsay remained uncertain about German intentions.⁶⁰ Paul Cambon suggested to Lansdowne on 3 May that Germany's conduct might be the outcome of a mouvement irréfléchi by William II. It could also, he speculated, be the result either of an attempt to get rid of Delcassé, or of the desire to obtain a Moorish port.⁶¹ In Bertie's view German diplomacy remained rooted in her acquisitive ambitions. He wrote privately to Lansdowne on 12 May:

It is evident that Germany will take the first opportunity of any difficulty we may be in to humiliate us. We shall not conciliate her unless we break with France and facilitate her preparations to become a really Great Naval Power to our detriment.⁶²

That Germany was set upon securing some material advantage from the crisis would seem to have been confirmed in Bertie's mind by news from Spain.

German diplomacy at Madrid had varied during the previous six months between efforts to woo the Spaniards away from their French connexion, and outright bullying of the Spanish authorities.⁶³ Then at the beginning of May reports reached the Foreign Office from Teneriffe that a German syndicate was negotiating with a Spanish merchant from the Canaries for a coaling station there.⁶⁴ Moreover, on 5 May Sir Arthur Nicolson the newly appointed British ambassador at Madrid, informed Lansdowne that his German colleague had just warned the Spanish foreign minister that if at this juncture Spain

60. Paleologue, pp. 232-235.

61. Lansdowne to Bertie, 3 May 1905, B.D., iii 86.
P.Cambon to Delcassé, 8 May, 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no.416.

62. Bertie to Lansdowne, 12 May 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Bertie wrote on that same day to de Bunsen: 'So long as France and England hold together, he (the German emperor) will find it difficult to exercise the influence he desires to possess, for he will hardly go to war with such a bad case as he has in Morocco' Bertie to de Bunsen, 12 May 1912 cited in E.T.S. Dugdale, p.205.

63. Nicolson to Lansdowne, 12 Feb.1905; 31 March 1905; 3 April 1905; 3 April 1905; 6 April 1905; 7 April 1905; 11 April 1905; 14 April 1905; F.O.72/2209, despt.nos.26,54,55,58 and 59; tels.19, 21 and 22, and despt no.67, and tel.23.

64. Nicolson to Lansdowne, 5 May 1905, F.O.72/2209, despt.no.86.

were to despatch her newly appointed minister at Tangier to Fez, it would be regarded at Berlin as an 'unfriendly act'.⁶⁵

Bertie had for a long time considered it possible that Germany might seek to acquire a naval station in Spain's insular possessions. But the present state of relations between Germany and Spain seemed in his view to offer an opportunity to Britain for proposing an arrangement whereby such concessions might be avoided. In his letter of the 12th he asked Lansdowne if the government could not 'take advantage of the menacing attitude of Germany towards Spain in order to offer to assist Spain in meeting any attack on the Balearic Islands, the Canaries, and Fernando Po', in return for Spanish assurances on the future safety of Gibraltar. He suggested that the government might declare to Spain that it had no territorial desires as regards any of the Spanish mainland and islands, and if she would undertake not to 'cede, sell, let, or otherwise alienate in whole or part any of her islands, or allow them to be used by a foreign power as coaling stations or depots', Britain would assist her in defending them. The Spaniards, he thought, should promise that 'no works, guns or emplacements' should be 'created or laid down that would affect the safety of Gibraltar'. The French might in normal circumstances have opposed such an exclusive arrangement between Britain and Spain, but, Bertie contended, they could not at the moment regard it as aimed at them.⁶⁶

65. Nicolson to Lansdowne, 5 May 1905, B.D., iii no.87. Lansdowne to Bertie, 8 May 1905, F.O.27/3703, despt.no.279.

66. Bertie to Lansdowne, 12 May 1905, op.cit. An arrangement such as Bertie suggested had already been considered by the Foreign Office during 1898. This had been as a result of reports received during the Spanish-American war of the construction of concrete gun emplacements by Spain on the coast of the bay of Algeciras. Christopher Howard, Britain and the Casus Belli, 1822-1902 (London, 1974), pp.115-116. 'Editorial Note', B.D.vii, 1-2. F.O. Memorandum, 9 March 1906, F.O.371/135. For Bertie's part in these earlier negotiations see Bertie to Grey, 25 Dec. 1906, B.D.vii, no.7.

Bertie was not alone in recommending an understanding with Spain. In January Sanderson had suggested to Nicolson that there might be advantage in obtaining a Spanish engagement not to alienate to any other power a portion of their sphere of influence in Morocco.⁶⁷ But Nicolson had considered it more prudent 'to feel the way before broaching a secret convention'.⁶⁸ Perhaps for this reason Lansdowne took no immediate action upon Bertie's proposal. Of more pressing concern to him was Bertie's warning about a possible Franco-German accommodation, for if, as Cambon had suggested, the Germans were to drive Delcassé out of office, they might be prepared to settle with his successor. Already on 8 May Bertie had reported that Delcassé's position was again 'very shaky', and he had heard reports of a difference between the premier and the foreign minister over the activities of the Russian fleet in France's territorial waters in the Far East.⁶⁹ Mallet also expressed fears that the French would 'through funk' settle with Germany and leave Britain in the lurch.⁷⁰ The French, he complained, had 'shown no sign of taking us into their confidence over Morocco ... they have never so much as approached the question of what we should do, if

67. Sanderson to Nicolson, 15 Feb. 1905, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/336.

68. Nicolson to Sanderson, 4 Feb., 1905 and 25 Feb. 1905, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/337.

69. According to Bertie's information it was only owing to Rouvier's insistence that the Russians had been invited to quit Kamranh Bay. Bertie thought that Delcassé feared that by speaking plainly to Russia he might facilitate arrangements between Russia and Germany. Paul Cambon was spoken of as a possible successor to Delcassé, but Bertie observed that Barrère, the French ambassador at Rome, was thought fitter. Bertie to Lansdowne, 8 May 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Bertie to Lansdowne, 8 May 1905, no.173a., F.O.27/3705. On the weakness of Delcassé's position within the French cabinet see: P.Cambon to H.Cambon, 13 May 1905, Correspondence, ii, 193-195.

70. Bertie to Mallet, 19 May 1905, Bertie MSS., A. F.O. 800/164.

Germany attacked them'.⁷¹ When, therefore, on 17 May Cambon spoke to the foreign secretary about Delcassé's difficulties in trying to find out what the German government desired, Lansdowne endeavoured to impress on him his wish that the British and French governments should keep each other fully informed of everything that came to their knowledge. They should, he observed, 'so far as possible discuss in advance any contingencies by which they might in the course of events find themselves confronted'. To illustrate this point, he reminded Cambon of Bertie's communication to Delcassé of 25 April with regard to a Moroccan port for Germany. He had heard fears expressed, he said, 'that...the French might be induced to purchase the acquiescence of Germany by concessions of a kind which we were not likely to regard with favour in other parts of the world'.⁷²

Paul Cambon seems, like Delcassé, to have believed that France would be able to rely upon receiving British military assistance in the event of a war with Germany.⁷³ Lansdowne's plea for consultations therefore appeared to him to be nothing less than an extension of the assurances contained in Bertie's aide mémoire. Moreover, according to Cambon's account, Lansdowne agreed when he asked him if for example the French had serious reason to believe in an unjustified aggression, the British government 'serait tout prêt à se concerter avec le Gouvernement français sur les mesures à prendre'?⁷⁴

71. Mallet to Sanders, 13 May 1905, Balfour MSS., (B.M.) Add.49747.

72. Lansdowne to Bertie, 17 May 1905, B.D., iii, no.94.

73. Annexes, D.D.F.2, viii, 557. Paléologue, p.248. C.Andrew, p.279.

74. According to Cambon's account, his conversation with Lansdowne had been mainly concerned with German intrigues and misrepresentations against Britain and France. Cambon had said to Lansdowne that the only way to bring the German emperor to 'une saine appréciation des choses est de le convaincre que notre entente est solide'. To this Lansdowne had replied: 'Je partage votre sentiment...et dès à présent le Gouvernement britannique est tout prêt à s'entendre avec le Gouvernement français sur les mesures à prendre si la situation devenait inquiétante'. P.Cambon to Delcassé, 18 May 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no.443.

There is, however, no record of this in Lansdowne's account of the conversation. The foreign secretary may perhaps have regarded it as simply a clarification of a point which was not worth noting, but whatever the case, it could hardly have discouraged the French from thinking in terms of closer ties with Britain.

Meanwhile at Paris Bertie had concluded that Delcassé's position inside the French cabinet had improved. On 18 May Barrère assured him that Delcassé had 'weathered the storm', and at dinner that evening both the foreign minister and Rouvier seemed to be on good terms. Bertie estimated that in these circumstances, unless Germany succeeded in detaching Italy and Spain, the French government, 'so long as we stick to France, will not believe in a German attack on France'. Nevertheless, he recommended to Mallet in a letter of 19 May that Britain might come to an understanding with France for the defence of 'certain Anglo-French interests viz. the non-acquisition by Germany of any political position in Holland or her colonies, or any port on the coast (Atlantic) of Morocco'.⁷⁵ This proposal for a very limited commitment to France, which in form resembled the arrangement which four years before he had suggested that Britain might make with Germany, was the nearest that Bertie was to come during 1905 to advocating in a written document an alliance with the French. Indeed, it was probably no more than an engagement such as this that Bertie had in mind when on the following day, at a dinner given by the Marquise de Breteuil, he raised the subject of the entente, with the Baron de Courcel, a former French ambassador at London and Berlin,

75. Bertie to Lansdowne, 18 May 1905; and Bertie to Mallet, 19 May 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

and Paléologue. According to the latter, he asserted:

It is not enough to have created the entente cordiale; we must give it muscles and the wherewithal to show its strength. We shall never serve the cause of peace until the brawlers and troublemakers in Berlin are afraid of us...

Language such as this may have pleased Paléologue, who himself advocated a firm stand by France against Germany.⁷⁶ Yet Bertie may also have unwittingly encouraged Delcassé's opponents to unseat him. His aide mémoire of 25 April, the cautious assurances which King Edward had offered to the French during a recent visit to France, and Lansdowne's statement of 17 May, had all allowed Delcassé and those officials who were closest to him to think in terms of a possible Anglo-French alliance.⁷⁷ Such an arrangement was

76. Paléologue, p.249. Some exaggeration may also have to be allowed for on the part of Paléologue. When in January 1912 Paléologue, after a spell as French minister at Sofia, returned to the Quai d'Orsay as political director, Bertie commented: 'Mr. Findlay (the British minister at Sofia) mentioned in his report on the Heads of Foreign Missions at Sofia for 1910-1911 that Monsieur Paléologue was excitable and inclined to spread sensational and alarmist rumours and that at times his indiscretions were almost incredible.'

I am inclined to believe from what I have heard of M. Paléologue that Mr. Findlay's estimate of him was in no way exaggerated'. In a subsequent private letter Bertie wrote of Paléologue: 'He is or was at Sofia a "marchand de canards" and his anxiety is to be doing'. Bertie to Grey, 26 Jan. 1912, F.O.371/1366. Bertie to Grey, 15 June 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

77. Edward VII stayed in Paris at the beginning of May on his way back from the Mediterranean. He met Delcassé there on several occasions, but the foreign minister was reticent about his first two conversations with him. From this Paléologue gathered that the king had advised Delcassé to try to better Franco-German relations. But an hour long interview between the King and Delcassé on 4 May relieved the latter's nerves and 'restored his composure'. Paléologue wrote a fortnight later: 'Delcassé appears to me to have acquired the certainty in his conversation with Edward VII that in this event (war with Germany) all the British forces would come to our aid'. Paléologue, 239 and 249-250. The king also had a conversation with Radolin, but according to Lansdowne what had passed between them had been 'fairly inconsequential'. Yet according to the Baron von Eckhardstein Edward had left no doubt in Paris that in a Franco-German war England would place herself on the French side. Bertie to Lansdowne, 1 May 1905 Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Bertie to Lansdowne, 5 May 1905; Lansdowne to Bertie, 11 May 1905; Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/127. Radolin to Bülow, 1 May 1905; Bülow to AA, 5 May, 1905; G.P., xx pt.2, nos.6848 and 6652.

not, however, desired by Rouvier and those of Delcassé's colleagues who believed that the outcome of a closer association with England would be a war with Germany in which France would be the loser. Rouvier was only too aware of the fact that France was not prepared to meet a German invasion, and that Britain could do little to aid her in a land war.⁷⁸ In April he had allowed the German ambassador to know that he would not be displeased to be rid of Delcassé, and at a meeting with him and senior French diplomats at the Elysee palace on 21 May he rejected the idea of any concerted action with Britain.⁷⁹

It was unfortunate that in these circumstances Lansdowne should have chosen to try to correct Cambon's misapprehension of what he had said on 17 May. After receiving on 24 May a copy of that part of Cambon's account of their conversation, which related to closer co-operation, Lansdowne wrote to him

78. The French financier Betzold told Radolin that Rouvier believed that only England could draw any advantage from a diplomatic or armed conflict between France and Germany. Radolin to Bülow, 28 May 1905, G.P., xx, pt.2, no.6657 and 6658. Note sur le Conseil des Ministres on M.Delcassé a donné sa démission 6 June 1905 Annexes, D.D.F.2, vi, 601-607. Annexes, D.D.F.2, viii, 560-561.

79. Radolin to AA, 27 April 1905; Note by Holstein, 2 May 1905; Radolin to Bülow, 30 April 1905; G.P., xx, pt.2, nos. 6635, 6646 and 6647. It was at the meeting at the Elysée on 21 May that Paul Cambon announced that Lansdowne had told him with regard to a possible German aggression against France that 'l'Angleterre était disposée à s'engager jusqu'au bout'. According to Barrère Rouvier replied: 'Ne faites rien, gardez-vous d'aller plus loin; n'entamer pas de négociation nouvelle avec le Gouvernement anglais; ce serait trop dangereux'. A.Combarieu, Sept Ans à L'Elysée avec le Président Émile Loubet (Paris, 1932), pp.309-311. Barrère also told Paleologue that Rouvier had said 'For heavens sake, go no further with negotiations of that kind; if the Germans hear of them they'll attack us at once'. Paleologue, p.248. C.Andrew, pp.288-289)

that he was not sure that he had

...succeeded in making quite clear...our desire that there should be full and confidential discussions between the two Governments, not so much in consequence of some act of unprovoked aggression on the part of another Power, as in anticipation of any complications to be apprehended.⁸⁰

To Cambon this appeared to be less like a tactful attempt to put right his own misinterpretation of Britain's position than an amplification of Lansdowne's original proposals. 'Ce n'est plus', he observed to Delcassé, 'à une entente en cas d'agression qu'il nous convie c'est à une discussion immédiate et à un examen de la situation générale'. For the French government to accept this would, he thought, be to enter in 'la voie d'une entente générale qui constituerait en réalité une alliance'.⁸¹

Delcassé also regarded Lansdowne's letter as an offer of an alliance. As such, however, it was not welcomed by either Rouvier or the majority of his colleagues.⁸² Thus when on 6 June Delcassé insisted on the need to accept such an arrangement, he met with strong opposition in the council of ministers. Finally he offered his resignation, and Rouvier

80. In an attempt to register Lansdowne's assurances of 17 May Cambon wrote to Lansdowne on 24 May to remind him that he had declared, '...si les circonstances l'exigent, si par exemple nous avons des craintes sérieuses de croire à une agression injustifiée de la part d'une certaine Puissance, le gouvernement britannique serait tout prêt à se concerter avec le Gouvernement français sur les mesures à prendre'. P.Cambon to Delcassé, 25 May 1905 and annexe, D.D.F.2, vi, no.455. Lansdowne to Bertie, 31 May 1905, B.D. iii, no.95.

81. P. Cambon to Delcassé, 29 May 1905, and annexe, D.D.F.2, vi, no.465.

82. Delcassé instructed Cambon to inform Lansdowne that he was ready to join him in examining all aspects of the situation which was undoubtedly somewhat worrying. In view, however, of the opposition which Rouvier had recently displayed towards a tighter understanding with England, Cambon withheld from following these instructions. He thought that the reply to Lansdowne should be no more than cordial until Delcassé had obtained the consent of the cabinet for a general understanding. Paleologue 258 and 261-268. P.Cambon to Delcassé, 1 June 1905, D.D.F.2, vi, no.480.

provisionally assumed the role of foreign minister.

Although Bertie had on several occasions reported upon the precarious position which Delcasse occupied, his resignation came as a surprise to him. He received the news not at the embassy, but at Dieppe, where he was enjoying three days leave. When he did meet Delcasse on 10 June, the ex-minister attributed his fall to the intrigues of the German government. He had, he said, been prepared to make commercial concessions, but not political or territorial ones, if the Germans had been ready to discuss Morocco. This perturbed Bertie, for if Delcasse's colleagues had disapproved of his policy, 'it would', he warned Lansdowne, 'seem probable that they might be ready to yield something more than commercial advantages'.⁸⁴

All this came as a profound shock to Lansdowne. It had, he observed to Bertie, produced 'a very painful impression in England'. He further explained that people said that if a British minister had had 'a dead set' made against him by a foreign power, the country and government would not only have stood by him, but would probably have supported him more vigorously than ever, 'whereas France had apparently thrown over Delcasse in a mere fit of panic'. The result, he estimated, was that the '"entente" is quoted at a much lower price than it was a fortnight ago'. He had gathered from what Cambon had told him that Rouvier would not accept a conference, but, he commented,

83. Rouvier subsequently told Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at Madrid, that he had received from Bülow through a confidential emissary the warning that if the French accepted a British alliance, Germany would declare war. Paléologue, pp. 264-270. Note sur le Conseil des Ministres où M. Delcassé a donné sa démission, 6 June 1905, *op.cit.* For a detailed study of the differences between Delcasse and Rouvier see C. Andrew, pp. 289-298.

84. Bertie to Lansdowne, 10 June 1905, *B.D.*, iii, no. 96.

if the French 'really are on the run we might not extract an unsatisfactory settlement out of such a conference'. Metternich, had recently represented Germany as the upholder of the legal status of Morocco, and Lansdowne considered that attitude to 'scarcely be reconcilable with a proposal to steal territory from the Sultan'.⁸⁵

Bertie, who was evidently anxious to maintain his government's confidence in the entente, did not judge France so harshly for the fall of Delcassé. Nor did he place the blame for it entirely on German intrigues. He assured Lansdowne on 15 June that 'Delcassé would have fallen even if Germany had not been menacing, but he might not have fallen so soon'. Delcassé's departure, he thought, was in great part due to his treatment of his colleagues, whom he had not kept fully informed of his intentions. While Rouvier's predecessor, Combes, had been pre-occupied with matters affecting the relations between church and state, Bertie considered that things had gone well for Delcassé. But, Bertie claimed, he had come to consider himself indispensable, and other ministers had grown jealous of him. Germany, Bertie suspected, had taken advantage of the feeling that a scapegoat was needed, and had 'spent money, and spread it about' that Delcassé's mismanagement of foreign policy was the sole cause of the misunderstanding. His resignation, he concluded, 'had the appearance of being a sacrifice to a German menace but it was not entirely so'.⁸⁶

85. Newton, pp.341-342.

86. Bertie to Lansdowne, 9 June 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/127. Bertie to Lansdowne, 15 June 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. In May Radolin had indicated to Rouvier through Betzold that good relations with Germany were only possible if there were at the head of the Quai d'Orsay a person in whom the German government had full confidence. Radolin to Bülow, 8 May 1905, G.P., xx, pt.2, 6658. But in September William Lavino, The Times' correspondent at Paris, told Bertie that Rouvier had been bent on getting rid of Delcassé of whom he was 'violently jealous'. Bertie to Lansdowne, 7 Sept.1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

As the result of Delcassé's fall the value of the entente was called into question in London. On 8 June Balfour wrote to the king that France could no longer be trusted not to yield to German threats, and that 'it must be to other means than French assistance that we must look for our protection'.⁸⁷ Lansdowne was perhaps considering the necessity for such a course when he took up again the idea of an arrangement with Spain.

The opportunity to raise this matter with the Spanish government was presented by the visit to London in June of King Alphonso and his foreign minister de Villa Urrutia.⁸⁸ In a conversation with the latter Lansdowne put to him a proposal for an understanding which was broadly similar to that which Bertie had suggested in May.⁸⁹ Bertie, however, had little sympathy with the way in which the project was handled by the British embassy at Madrid. Although he valued France's friendship, he rarely lost sight of the fact that France remained a potential rival. Thus when Nicolson suggested to Lansdowne that he might inform Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at Madrid, of the British approach to Spain, there was an immediate protest from Bertie. 'Security for Gibraltar', he claimed, 'is not a permanent French interest and its protection from danger on the land side might not always entirely suit the policy of France'. He thought that if the French were made aware of the British proposal, they

87. S.Lee, ii, 344. On 12 June Lansdowne wrote to the British ambassador at Rome: 'We are all at sixes and sevens in consequence of Delcassé's retirement'. Lansdowne to Egerton, 12 June 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/153. Memorandum by Mallet, 13 July 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/145.

88. Lansdowne to Nicolson, 3 June 1905, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/336. The Marquis de Villa Urrutia was subsequently to be appointed Spanish ambassador at London, where he remained from 1906 until 1913.

89. Lansdowne to Bertie, 12 June 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Lansdowne to Cartwright, 8 June 1905, B.D. vii, no.1.

would, if they objected, try to persuade the Spanish government not to accept it in its entirety. On the other hand, if the German government were to learn of the negotiations, they would, he reasoned, have another grievance against France and England for the arrangement would obviously be aimed at keeping them out.

Bertie considered that Gibraltar's security was a 'real and most important British interest' and a good justification for Britain undertaking to 'defend the Spanish islands against all-comers including possibly France'. Although Germany was the power which at this stage he was most concerned about, he was quite conscious that France might desire at some future date to apply pressure upon Britain through Spain.⁹⁰ When it proved too late to stop Nicolson from informing Jules Cambon of Britain's designs, Bertie wrote to Mallet castigating their colleague's 'excess of zeal'. Yet, though Bertie continued to hope for an arrangement with Spain, for the moment no more progress was made in this direction.⁹¹

90. Bertie was in London in July and had the opportunity to see the telegram in which Nicolson requested Lansdowne's permission to inform his French colleague at Madrid of the proposed accord. Editorial Note, B.D.vii, 3. Bertie to Grey, 25 Dec.1906, B.D.vii, no.7. Bertie to Lansdowne, 8 July 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Jules Cambon was the brother of the French ambassador at London. He himself was ambassador at Madrid from 1902 until 1907. From 1907 until the outbreak of war in 1914 he was French ambassador at Berlin.

91. Bertie, nevertheless, persisted in his advocacy of an agreement with Spain. After it had been decided that Nicolson should succeed Hardinge at St.Petersburg, Bertie wrote to Hardinge with regard to the future of the embassy at Madrid: 'We want a man who will bring the Spaniards into an arrangement that will secure Gibraltar against guns on Spanish territory and will keep out from Spanish Islands, Germans, whether as possessors or concession holders'. Barrington to Bertie, 11 July 1905: Bertie to Hardinge, 23 Nov.1905; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Bertie to Barrington, 13 July, 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/127.

Both Rouvier and Bülow had hoped that Delcassé's resignation would pave the way to a Franco-German agreement on Morocco, but the German government had already committed themselves to an international solution, and to Rouvier's dismay Radolin required France's acceptance of the sultan's invitation to a conference.⁹² Bülow was similarly disappointed to find that while Rouvier showed signs of being ready to consider an accord with Germany on Morocco, the Bagdad railway, and the Far East, he would not accept a conference without some preliminary arrangement on what was to be settled at such a gathering. His insistence on this point led Radolin to warn him on 10 June that the status quo would have to be maintained and Germany would be behind Morocco with all her forces.⁹³

Although Bülow declined to enter into any pourparlers with the French government before they had accepted, at least in principle, a conference, Radolin was able to indicate to Rouvier on 14 June that Germany would take into account France's

92. According to Abel Combarieu, Loubet's secretary general, Rouvier seemed to lose his head during his first eight days at the Quai d'Orsay. He hesitated between throwing himself into Germany's arms and tightening the entente with England. Ultimately he was not in a position to radically change Delcassé's policy. Combarieu, p.317. Paléologue, pp.271-272. Flotow to AA, 7 June 1905 and 9 June 1905; Bülow to Radolin 10 June 1905; Radolin to AA, 11 June and 14 June, 1905; G.P. xx, pt.2, nos. 6694, 6700, 6702, 6705, 6710. Lansdowne to Bertie, 12 July 1905, B.D., iii, no.52.

93. According to Paul Cambon, Rouvier told Radolin that a conference would either be useless or dangerous. 'Useless, if as was quite conceivable there were no real differences of opinion, dangerous if they entered into it with divergent opinions and without a previous attempt to come to terms'. Lansdowne to Bertie, 14 June 1905, F.O.99/434, despt.no.357. Radolin to AA, 11 June 1905; Bülow to William II, 22 June 1905; G.P., xx, pt.2, nos.6705 and 6723. N.Rich, pp.707-709. Paléologue, pp.271-272.

desires with regard to the future administration of Morocco.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in Parisian society war was increasingly accepted as the likely outcome of the crisis, and Paul Cambon hurried back to Paris to urge Rouvier to stand firm.⁹⁵ For his part Bertie continued to believe that Germany was bluffing. The gloomy demeanor which Radolin had adopted, he attributed to an order from Berlin that he should frighten people into believing that Germany would fight.⁹⁶ He was not, however, aware of how the conversations were progressing between Radolin and Rouvier. Indeed, it was perhaps this combination of optimism and ignorance that led him to suggest a means by which the Germans might be allowed to retreat from their present stance.⁹⁷

Bülow had based his appeal for a conference on article XVII of the Madrid convention of 1880, which had guaranteed the most favoured nation treatment in Morocco to all signatory powers. Their approval, he contended, was therefore necessary for the introduction of the projected reforms.⁹⁸

94. According to an aide memoire by Radolin which he probably left with Rouvier on 17 July a conference would be in the interest of France 'Car elle faciliterait au Maroc de satisfaire aux desirs justifiés de la France, qui, dans ce cas, obtiendraient la sanction de l'Europe, ainsi que les réformes reconnues comme nécessaires'. Departmental Note, 14 June 1905; Rouvier to P.Cambon, 14 June 1905; and Aide-mémoire from the German embassy, 16 June 1905. D.D.F., 2, vii, nos. 54, 55 and 711.

95. Paléologue, pp. 272-275.

96. Bertie to Lansdowne, 15 June 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/170. Towards the end of July Bertie observed that the public in Paris had 'regained their equanimity'. He noted: 'It was pitiable at first the funk they were in'. Bertie to Hardinge, 25 July 1905, Hardinge MSS., 7.

97. Bertie to Lansdowne, 20 June 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/170.

98. Rouvier claimed that the Madrid convention had been concerned with the question of protection in Morocco, and that the most favoured nation clause was not therefore applicable to the present case. Bertie to Lansdowne, 14 June 1905, F.O. 99/434, tel. 114. Lansdowne to Lowther, 8 June 1905, B.D. iii, no. 116.

Bertie assumed that the applicability of this article might be a matter of dispute between Radolin and Rouvier. Thus on 20 June he suggested to Lansdowne that the issue might be taken to arbitration. Moreover, without instructions, he also mentioned to Rouvier the possibility of going to the Hague. This course, he argued, would not settle the quarrel between the French and German governments, but if arbitration declared the article's non-applicability to the present difficulty, 'the German Emperor need no longer insist on a conference as a point of dignity, and the two governments could negotiate without other parties being drawn into the question'.⁹⁹

Although Bertie was correct in thinking that the German demand for a conference was largely a matter of saving face, neither in London nor in Paris did he find any support for his idea. To Cambon Lansdowne indicated that the French need not bother with a reply. The suggestion, he thought, was 'intempestive', and he felt it wrong to complicate the conversations with Germany with a useless legal discussion.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile on 21 June Rouvier delivered to Radolin a note in which she reiterated the French desire to know Germany's views on the precise points to be discussed at a conference, and the solution which she foresaw.¹⁰¹ This refusal on the part of France to unconditionally accept a conference was with some justice attributed by Bülow and Radolin to the pressure put upon Rouvier by those officials who had been closest to Delcassé. They were also inclined to blame the British government for aggravating the situation.

99. Bertie to Lansdowne, 20 June 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/

127. Rouvier to P.Cambon, 22 June 1905, D.D.F.2, vii, no.102.

100. Minute by Sanderson on Bertie to Lansdowne, 20 June 1905.

Ibid.

101. Radolin to AA, 21 June 1905, G.P.xx pt.2. no.6720.

102. B

Already a report had reached Berlin from Paris that Britain had offered to France an offensive and defensive alliance, and Bertie's conduct did nothing to modify German suspicions about British intentions.¹⁰²

In a conversation which he had with the German ambassador at a party given by the Prince de Murat on 23 June, Bertie upheld Rouvier's views with regard to a conference. According to a despatch which he sent to Lansdowne on the next day he suggested to Radolin 'unless some settlement were arrived at beforehand, a conference would be likely to complicate matters'.¹⁰³ This seems, however, not to have been the whole story. On 26 June Prince Albert of Monaco, a friend of Rouvier's who had close contact with Bülow, telegraphed from Kiel to the French statesman, Joseph Reinach, that he had learned that Bertie had made to Radolin a 'scène extraordinairement violent disant France peut pas et doit pas accepter conférence'. Radolin, he subsequently observed, was profoundly troubled by this 'sortie'.¹⁰⁴

102. Bülow to Metternich, 13 June 1905; Radolin to AA, 14 June 1905; Bülow to William II, 22 June 1905; Radolin to AA, 22 June 1905; Bülow to Radolin, 23 June 1905; Flotow to Bülow, 7 June 1905; G.P., xx, pt.2, nos.6708, 6710, 6723, 6724, 6726 and 6853. Holstein to Radolin, 23 June 1905, N.Rich and M.H.Fisher (ed.) The Holstein Papers (4 vols., English ed. Cambridge 1963), iv, no.894. Draft Note on Morocco by P.Cambon, 16 June 1905, D.D.F.2, vii, no.69. Eugen Weber, The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905-1914. (Berkley and Los Angeles, 1968), pp 32-33. Paléologue, pp.263-264 and 272-273. N.Rich, pp.710-711.

103. Bertie to Lansdowne, 24 June 1905, F.O.99/434, despt.no.228.

104. This may have been a deliberate attempt on the part of Bülow to discredit Bertie. He had already proposed to the German emperor that they might endeavour to influence Rouvier's attitude towards a conference through the Prince of Monaco. Prince Albert's information may have come directly from the emperor who was then at Kiel or from Bülow whom he met at Berlin on 25 July. In his telegram he urged Reinach to warn Rouvier of what Bertie had said. Prince Albert of Monaco to Reinach, 26 June 1905, tel. and letter, Reinach MSS., (B.N), N.A.Fr 13550. Bülow to William II, 22 June 1905, G.P., xx pt.2, no.6723. Bülow to William, 25 June 1905, F.Whyte (ed), Letters of Prince von Bülow (London), p.139.

Similar information was signalled by de Stuers, the Dutch minister at Paris to his government at the Hague. He reported on 30 June that Bertie had introduced himself to his German colleague with the question '"Why the devil do you want to go to that conference"',¹⁰⁵ Rumour also had it that there had been a row between the two ambassadors. Bülow discounted this but he informed Metternich that Bertie had 'thought fit...in the presence of the Crown Prince of Greece, to address a remonstrance to Radolin' quite suddenly, and in an excited tone of voice regarding the 'selfishness of our efforts to bring about a Morocco Conference'.¹⁰⁶ Six months later the German emperor told the financier, Alfred Beit, that Bertie had been 'most rude to the German ambassador', and had protested to him 'You won't and shan't have this conference'. It was so bad, the emperor declared, 'that Prince Radolin would have been justified in challenging him to a duel'.¹⁰⁷

Some exaggeration may be allowed for on the part of William II. Bertie denied his claims and asserted that he was on the best of terms with Radolin. But available evidence suggests that the language used by Bertie to the German

105. There appears to be some discrepancy amongst those who recorded Bertie's conversation about the date on which it took place. Prince Albert refers to it having taken place on 24 June, and de Stuers refers to the 28th. But the only party which Bertie attended at the Prince de Murat's during this period was on the 23rd. De Stuers to van Weede, 30 June 1905, C.Smit (ed.), Bescheiden Betreffende Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland. (The Hague, 1958), 3rd period, ii, no.459.

106. Bülow to Metternich, 22 July 1905, F.Whyte, 148.

107. Note for the President of the Council, 28 Jan.1905, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.1, no.84. Memorandum by Lord Escher, 18 Jan.1905, Maurice Brett (ed.), Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Escher (4 vols.London 1934) ii, 138. Beit to Grey, 29 Dec.1905, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/13.

ambassador was somewhat less guarded than that which he had reported to Lansdowne.¹⁰⁸ Not that Radolin, who, according to Bülow, had chosen to ignore Bertie's remarks, seems to have borne any personal grudge against him.¹⁰⁹ He did, however, along with other German officials, consider Bertie to be an enemy of Germany. On 29 June he warned Holstein that Paul Cambon was trying to terrorize the 'schwachen Rouvier' and to prevent a Franco-German agreement. Bertie, he wrote, was going to London to act in a similar sense.¹¹⁰ From Jean Dupuy, a former French premier, who had acted as an intermediary between Rouvier and the German embassy, he also learned that Bertie was endeavouring to bring about an Anglo-French

108. Von Mühlberg, an under-secretary of state at the Wilhelmstrasse, told Lascelles in August 1905 that 'Radolin had reported that Bertie, whom he had met somewhere had made some disparaging remarks about German action in Morocco, which he (Radolin) had pretended not to hear, and to which he had not replied'. Lascelles to Lansdowne, 3 Aug. 1905 and 27 Oct. 1905, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/18. King Edward seems, however, to have accepted Bertie's explanation. According to Paul Cambon he had told the German ambassador that Bertie's quarrel with Radolin existed only in the imaginations of novelists. P. Cambon to Rouvier, 25 Jan. 1906, P.D.F.2, ix, pt 1, no.55.

109. In September 1906 Radolin told Lascelles that he was at a loss to understand how the report of his difference with Bertie had arisen. 'He had always been on friendly terms with Sir Francis, and there had never been the slightest question of any offence having been offered or taken. It was true that at the time when the German Government was pressing for a Conference on the Morocco question Sir Francis Bertie had expressed his opinion somewhat freely on the subject, but both the Italian and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors in Paris in their conversations with Prince Radolin had not concealed their disapproval of the action of the German Government, though perhaps in a more diplomatic form'. Eight months later Lascelles reported that Radolin had spoken 'highly of Francis Bertie with whom he was on the best of terms and whom he liked very much'. Lascelles to Grey, 6 Sept. 1906, no.273, F.O.371/79. Lascelles to Grey, 11 April 1907, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/19.

It is also worth noting that Radolin attended Bertie's ricevimento at the British embassy only three days after the party at the Prince de Murats'. Paléologue, pp.281-282.

110. In April 1905 Radolin had warned Bülow that according to a generally well-informed person 'gilt in England Mr Balfour nicht für Deutschlands Freund, Lord Lansdowne nicht für unseren Feind, Sir F. Bertie hingegen für einen ausgesprochenen Gegner Deutschlands'. Radolin to Bülow, 25 April 1905; Radolin to AA, 29 June 1905; G.P., xx, pt.2, nos.6847 and 6751.

alliance.¹¹¹ This Holstein did not believe, and he thought that Dupuy was exaggerating for the sake of his own cause. Nevertheless, he observed to Radolin:

I certainly believe one thing quite firmly that both Bertie and possibly Lansdowne would like to see France involved in a war. England could then consider whether it was profitable to join in the war or not.¹¹²

Holstein was mistaken in his judgement. Bertie did see advantage for Britain in the continuing friction between France and Germany, but he did nothing to encourage the French to resort to arms. Nevertheless, Bertie appears to have been less than cautious in the language which he employed, and there was perhaps some truth in the somewhat obtuse claim of Athelstan-Johnson, an honorary attaché of the embassy, that Bertie was 'quite as pacific' as the German emperor.¹¹³

Talk about a British offer of an alliance to France probably had its origins in Lansdowne's efforts to explain his policy to Delcassé, and the various garbled reports which emanated from the Quai d'Orsay.¹¹⁴ Moreover, on 30 June Lister did suggest to Lansdowne that the scope of the entente might be extended by a British declaration to France.¹¹⁵ At that time Bertie was in London, and Lansdowne admitted that a good deal of thought had been given to the question. He considered, however, that the moment was inopportune for a new offer to

111. According to Dupuy Lansdowne and Bertie had also been putting pressure on Paul Cambon to raise new difficulties. Radolin to AA, 30 June 1905, G.P., xx, pt. 2, 6752. At this time there was a rumour in Paris that France had been offered an alliance by Britain. At Bertie's ricevimento on 26 June de Courcel announced to Paléologue that his general impression was that 'the Franco-British alliance is now a fact'. Paléologue, 281-282. See also Bertie to Barrington, 26 Sept. 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/127. That no alliance had been offered to France was emphasized by Sanderson in a letter to Lansdowne of October 1906. 'As a matter of fact', he observed, 'the contingency of a rupture with Germany was never discussed at all'. Sanderson to Lansdowne, 9 Oct. 1906, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/145.

112. Holstein to Radolin, 1 July, 1905, Holstein Papers, iv, no. 898.

113. Athelstan-Johnson to Bertie, 29 June 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

114. Flotow to Bülow, 7 June 1905, G.P., xx pt. 2, nos. 6853.

Lascelles to Lansdowne, 12 June 1905; 15 Oct. 1905; 16 Oct. 1905;

Bertie to Lansdowne, 14 Oct. 1905; B.D., iii, nos. 97, 98, 102, 103 and 101.

115. Lister to Lansdowne, 30 June 1905; 7 July 1905, Lansdowne MSS. F.O.800/127.

France. The French government had not asked for any fresh assurances, and he was hesitant about recommending Lister's suggestion to the cabinet and people. 'Recent events have', he observed, 'undoubtedly shaken people's confidence in the steadfastness of the French nation'.¹¹⁶

The support which Lansdowne continued to give to France, and the probability that she would have on her side the majority of the powers finally enabled the French government to accept a conference. Rouvier did so on 8 July, but only on condition that the Germans would recognise France's 'legitimate' interests in Morocco, and would agree to settle on an agenda with her.¹¹⁷ This provided the basis for a further squabble between Paris and Berlin which continued into the autumn. Nevertheless, Bülow was encouraged by the meeting of the German and Russian emperors at Björkö at the end of July to think once more in terms of a combination with Russia and France.¹¹⁸ By then, however, Bertie felt confident that the French government would not be prepared to comply with German wishes. They had, he wrote to Hardinge, 'regained their equanimity and courage', and the German emperor's fear of the Anglo-French entente had 'opened their eyes to its importance to France'. At the same time he placed the blame for the poor state of the Anglo-German relations squarely upon the architects of Germany's naval policy.¹¹⁹

116. Lansdowne to Lister, 8 July 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/127.

117. Lister to Lansdowne, 9 July 1905; Paper communicated by the French Ambassador, 11 July 1905; Lansdowne to Bertie, 11 July 1905 and 12 July 1905; B.D. iii, nos.146,147,150 and 152. Rouvier to de Chérissey, 10 July 1905, D.D.F.2, vii,no.209. N.Rich, pp.712-713.

118. N. Rich, pp.714-729.

119. Bertie to Hardinge, 25 Sept.1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

On 30 July Bertie explained to Betzold, an agent of Rothschilds and a friend of Bülow and Holstein, that whenever an increase in the German fleet was desired, it was supported by a campaign in the German press on the theme that Britain was planning an attack upon Germany. The result, he claimed was a counterblast in the British newspapers, and further additions to the Royal Navy. To Radolin, whom he met by chance in the Bois de Boulogne on the following evening, he again emphasized the danger posed for Britain by the expansion of the German navy. Superficial though these remarks were, they were taken in Berlin as further evidence of Bertie's ill-will towards Germany. According, for instance to Bertie's own account, he told Betzold that in a war with Germany Britain might act as she had done against France at the time of Napoleon.¹²⁰ But in a letter to Bülow of 10 August, Mühlberg, the acting German foreign secretary, reported that Bertie had amongst other violent invectives against Germany, warned Betzold that at Berlin they seemed to nourish Napoleonic tendencies, and that Britain must counter them as before.¹²¹

The officials of the Wilhelmstrasse might well have been confirmed in their estimate of Bertie if they had known of his efforts to preserve French confidence in Britain's goodwill. During August, the greater part of which month he spent in England, Bertie discouraged King Edward from including in the

120. Betzold was a German subject and acted on several occasions as an intermediary between Radolin and Rouvier. According to Bertie's account, Betzold had said to him that in a war with England and France, Germany would conquer France and make up her losses at her expense. Bertie to Lansdowne 31 July and 1 Aug. 1905; F.O. 27/3705, despt. nos. 285 and 286.

121. Mühlberg to Bülow, 10 Aug. 1905, G.P. xix, pt. 2 no. 6236.

holiday that he was planning to take at Marienbad a visit to the Emperor William. This had been mentioned by the German press as a possibility, but early in August during the celebrations connected with the reception of a French naval squadron at Cowes, Bertie put it to the king that a meeting with his imperial nephew at this stage in the Moroccan negotiations would be regarded in France as a léger oubli of Britain's obligations.¹²² The king appears to have accepted Bertie's advice for he eventually refused to meet with the emperor, and to Lansdowne's distress the outcome was a personal quarrel between the two monarchs that did nothing to ease the course of Anglo-German relations.¹²³

The Franco-German dispute over Morocco affirmed in Bertie's eyes the value of Britain's understanding with France, and the threat which Germany posed to British interests.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the re-establishment of peace in the Far East also opened up the prospect of containing this menace by a new diplomatic alignment. Japan's victories had checked Russian expansion, and Bertie now looked with sympathy upon the French desire for an Anglo-Russian rapprochement.

122. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 13 Aug.1905, D.D.F.2, vii, no.330.

123. S.Lee, 346. Knollys to Lascelles, 8 Aug.1905 and

14 Aug.1905; Lascelles to Lansdowne, 12 Sept.1905; Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/12. Lansdowne to Lascelles, 25 Sept.1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/130. Lansdowne wrote of the King to Balfour, 'He has got the German Emperor on the brain and I am afraid that his constant abuse of H.I.M. is doing a great deal of harm'. Lansdowne to Balfour, 23 Aug.1905, Balfour MSS., (B.M.), Add.49729.

124. In Bertie's view it had also demonstrated to the French the importance of their entente with England. He observed to Hardinge at the end of July 1905: 'What a Bill in the China Shop is William II ...his evident fear of the Anglo-French Entente has opened their (French) eyes to its importance and its protective force for France and has ...shown our loyalty to France'. Bertie to Hardinge, 25 July 1905, Hardinge MSS., 7.

Of French hopes, he wrote to Hardinge on 25 September:

Their idée fixe is to be the means of bringing about an understanding between England and Russia. That was Delcassé's policy. If it could be effected German Bill might amuse himself as much as he liked within his own German circle, he could hurt nobody.¹²⁵

Four years before, Bertie had advised his colleagues against an alliance with Germany on the grounds that it would involve Britain in more friction with France and Russia. Now he saw in an understanding with these two powers a means of depriving Germany of the opportunity to exploit such differences. Yet if Britain and France had been drawn closer together during 1905, this was due less to Bertie's diplomacy than to Germany's stand on Morocco. Nothing came of his suggestions for extending the scope of the entente and such encouragement as he offered to the French to think in terms of tighter links with Britain only helped to create at Paris and Berlin the false impression that Lansdowne was seeking an alliance. Moreover, after Delcassé's resignation, Bertie did not fully succeed in reassuring Lansdowne that Britain could rely on France. When on 7 September Bertie informed him that Lavino, The Times correspondent at Paris thought that the French government might collapse, Lansdowne replied that this instability afforded an argument to those who did not believe in the possibility of an enduring understanding with France. 'The machine worked (or seemed to work)', he added, 'so smoothly while it was run by Delcassé and Cambon that one was apt to forget this danger'.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Rouvier did not capitulate to Germany's demands, and the entente remained intact. Its future, however, was dependent upon the attitude which Lansdowne's successor would assume, and the outcome of the Morocco conference, which was to take place at Algeciras.

125. Bertie to Hardinge, 25 Sept. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

126. Bertie to Lansdowne, 7 Sept. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.
Lansdowne to Bertie 12 Sept. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

Chapter II.

Algeciras and its aftermath.

The political issues with which Bertie had to deal during his second year at Paris were no less crucial to the development of Anglo-French relations than those that had confronted him in 1905. Morocco and the German challenge to French pretensions there remained in the foreground of international diplomacy, and fresh attempts were made by the French to secure from the British government assurances about the nature and extent of the support which they would offer France. Bertie's own attitude towards relations with France and Germany changed little, but after Balfour's resignation in December 1905 and the formation of a Liberal government under Campbell-Bannerman, he had to accommodate himself to a new master at the Foreign Office.

In October 1905 Louis Mallet had expressed his hope to Bertie that Hardinge would become permanent under-secretary because of the overwhelming importance of 'having someone to keep the Liberals straight'.¹ Apprehensive lest Lansdowne should be succeeded by Campbell-Bannerman or Lord Elgin, he had predicted that in that case 'all the good seed sown in the last few years will come to nothing'.² The appointment, however, of Sir Edward Grey as foreign secretary was greeted by Bertie with satisfaction. The press and government circles in France, he observed to Grey, had feared the appointment of a minister with German leanings, and were pleased

1. Mallet to Bertie, (undated) Oct.1905, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/183. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman remained prime minister until April 1908.

2. Mallet to Bertie, 27 Jan.1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

to have one who had 'made a speech favourable to France!'³

The speech to which Bertie referred had been delivered by Grey on 21 October to the electors of the city of London. In it he had outlined the basis of the foreign policy of a future Liberal government: the alliance with Japan, friendship with the United States, and the understanding with France. At the same time he had spoken of his hopes for an improvement in relations with Russia, and also with Germany, so long as this was not at the expense of good relations with France. The address helped to reassure Paul Cambon that the entente would survive a change in government, and in a letter to Rouvier of 12 December he pointed out that while the Liberals were traditionally inclined towards Germany, they were above all pacifists, and would therefore give their approbation to the entente as a guarantee of peace.⁴ Nevertheless, Cambon had his doubts about the attitude of Grey's colleagues, and the possibility that the prime minister might make a bid for the Irish vote and thereby alienate the liberal imperialists in the cabinet seems to have worried him.⁵ At the end of January 1906 Bertie was still having to reassure Rouvier about the security of Grey's position.⁶

3. Bertie to Grey, 12 Dec.1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Bertie grew to like Grey very much. But he seems also to have considered the Liberal foreign secretary to be a little too sensitive in his dealings with other officials and in his handling of foreign policy. Bertie to Hardinge, 16 Dec.1916, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163. Mallet was also relieved at Grey's appointment. Mallet to Nicolson, 21 Dec.1905, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/536. Sir Edward Grey remained foreign secretary until December 1916.

4. Paul Cambon wrote of the attitude which the Liberals were like to assume towards the entente: 'S'ils cherchent à la transformer, ce ne sera pas pour la rendre moins étroite, ce sera pour lui enlever le caractère d'hostilité à d'autres puissances qu'elle prenait aux yeux de certains Anglais...si tantfois ces amis de la paix constataient qu'il se manifeste à Berlin des tendances belliqueuses s'ils voyaient l'Empereur d'Allemagne se poser en Europe comme le champion de l'autocratie et des idées de guerre, tous leurs sentiments s'uniraient pour les porter vers la France libérale et pacifique'. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 25 Oct.1905 and 12 Dec.1905, D.D.F.2, viii, nos.79 and 219.

5. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 5 Dec.1905, D.D.F.2, viii, 196.

6. Bertie to Knollys, 31 Jan.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

The general theme of Grey's pronouncement of 21 October had been to emphasize his endorsement of the broad lines of Lansdowne's foreign policy. But Grey was more inclined than his immediate predecessor to regard the entente as a fundamental and permanent element in Britain's relations with the continental powers. In this he differed from Bertie for whom close relations with France always remained essentially a matter of political expediency. Moreover, Bertie could hardly have countenanced the degree of equanimity with which Grey appeared at first to be ready to view the expansion of the German navy. Certainly he would not have agreed with the opinion expressed by Grey to Lascelles on 1 January that if only Britain could be sure that the Germans did not regard her public engagements as incompatible with their interests, and if they would believe that Britain did not mean badly to them 'recent friction would disappear'⁷. The poor state of Anglo-German relations was for Bertie largely the result of the threat posed by Germany's might and global ambitions to the security of the British empire. He frowned on efforts to encourage the French to give way to German demands in Morocco both because he believed that a German foothold there would endanger British interests, and because he feared that they might thereby drive the French into an arrangement with Berlin.

Bertie was perhaps closer to Lansdowne than to Grey in his attitude towards the Moroccan question. The new foreign secretary was, however, prepared to seek the advice of his officials,

7. Such was Grey's personal attachment to the entente that after only nine months in office he wrote to his colleague, Richard Haldane: 'I want to preserve the entente with France, but it isn't easy, and if it is broken up I must go'. Grey to Haldane, 3 Sept. 1906, Haldane MSS., (N.L.S.) 5907. A year later he observed 'Good relations with other countries must still be dependent upon the maintenance in letter and spirit of our agreement with France'. Grey to Rowland, 1 Sept. 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/110. See also Tyrrell to Nicolson, 25 Dec. 1906, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/336. K. Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, (London, 1971), pp. 130-134. Grey to Lascelles, 1 Jan. 1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/61.

and the changes in the Foreign Office which accompanied his arrival there helped to create a climate of opinion which was potentially more receptive to Bertie's views than hitherto. Hardinge's succession to Sanderson in the New Year and the appointment on his advice of Mallet as Grey's private secretary, placed two of Bertie's closest friends in positions of considerable influence.⁸ Yet, despite this, the advice proffered by Bertie during 1906 seems to have contributed little towards the tightening of the bonds which linked Great Britain with France.

Grey was well aware that the fate of the Anglo-French understanding might rest upon the outcome of the forthcoming conference at Algeciras. Determined both to support France within the terms of the 1904 agreement, and to defend Britain's interests in Morocco, he, like Lansdowne, sought from the French government full information about their aims and intentions.⁹ At the same time Paul Cambon, who was still under the impression that Lansdowne had been seeking discussions on what would amount to a greater commitment by Britain towards France, endeavoured to regain the opportunity which he believed his government had missed in May. In this task he received only cautious encouragement from Rouvier, who displayed no more desire for more formal ties with England than he had previously done. Nevertheless, neither he nor Grey could afford to neglect the possible

8. In the following year, 1907, Mallet succeeded Eldon Gorst as an assistant under-secretary, and William Tyrrell became Grey's private secretary. According to Lister, Mallet was to be trained eventually to succeed Hardinge. Mallet to Bertie, 25 April 1907, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. Hardinge to Edward VII, 24 April 1907, Hardinge MSS., 9. Lister to Bertie, 12 Dec. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

9. Grey to Nicolson, 20 Dec.1905; 21 Dec.1905; Bertie to Grey, 22 Dec.1905; B.D., iii, nos.200 and 204. Grey to Bertie, 13 Dec. 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Grey to Nicolson, 19 Dec.1905, Grey MSS., F.O.800/77, Grey to Lascelles, 16 Jan.1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/61.

eventuality of Britain and France being allies in a war with Germany.¹⁰

On 3 January Grey warned Metternich that if Germany forced a war on France 'public feeling in England would be so strong that it would be impossible to be neutral'.¹¹ Some five days later he counselled Haldane, the secretary of state for war, that 'popular feeling' might compel the government to aid France, and that he might suddenly be asked what he could do.¹² It was with a view to easing the problems that might arise in such a situation that Sir George Clarke, the secretary of the committee of imperial defence, had already established contact with Major Huguet, the French military attaché in London.¹³ Grey, who saw Clarke on 9 January, accepted that it would be impossible to approach the French through official channels to ascertain their views on co-operation 'as this would give the idea of an offensive and defensive alliance which does not exist'.¹⁴ When, however, on the next day Cambon suggested to him that unofficial military and

10. On 20 December King Edward declined to be drawn by Paul Cambon into a discussion on British military support for France. But when Cambon reminded the king of Lansdowne's earlier overtures, Edward VII advised him to seek his government's authorization for further discussions on this subject. While, however, Rouvier instructed Cambon to take up this matter again, he warned him: 'Il est Bien entendu qu'il s'agirait non pas d'arriver à un accord fermé et immédiat qu'il faut au contraire éviter, mais uniquement de vous assurer si, le cas échéant, un tel accord pourrait être conclu rapidement et même si les dispositions actuelles sont si certaines qu'un tel accord soit superflu'. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 21 December 1905; Rouvier to P.Cambon, 23 Dec. 1905; D.D.F.2, viii, nos. 262 and 265.

11. Grey to Lascelles, 9 Jan. 1906, B.D. iii, 229.

12. Grey to Haldane, 8 Jan. 1906, cited in Dudley Sommer, Haldane of Cloan, (London, 1960), p. 159. Richard Burdon Haldane was secretary of state for war until 1912 when he became Lord Chancellor.

13. The opening of the Anglo-French military conversations is dealt with in detail in S.R. Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy (Harvard, 1969) pp. 59-88. and Monger, pp. 236-256. The significance of the conversations for British defence planning is discussed in Nicholas d'Ombrain, War Machinery and High Policy (London, 1973), pp. 81-90 and John Gooch, The Plans of War. The General Staff and British Military Strategy C 1900-1916 (London, 1974), pp. 280-282. Sir George Clarke was secretary of the C.I.D. from 1904 until 1907. Major A. Huguet was French military attaché in London from 1906 until 1911.

14. Clarke to Esher 9 Jan. 1906, cited in Monger, p. 248.

naval communications should continue Grey 'did not dissent'.¹⁵

Bertie had no part in these first tentative discussions between the British and French military authorities. Indeed, he probably had no knowledge of them until he received from Grey a despatch describing his interview with Cambon of 10 January. On that day Cambon, who had recently discussed the matter with Rouvier, also put to Grey the 'great question' as to whether in the event of German aggression against France 'Great Britain would be prepared to render to France armed assistance'? Grey was much upset at being asked this. With a general election impending and the cabinet dispersed, he told Cambon that he felt unable 'to pledge the country to more than neutrality - a benevolent neutrality if such a thing existed'. Nevertheless, he did express his personal opinion that if Germany attacked France in consequence of a question arising from the 1904 agreement 'public opinion in England would be strongly moved in favour of France'.

Grey's answer did not satisfy Cambon, who promised to repeat the question after the elections. Nor did it meet with the approval of Mallet, who on the following day wrote to Bertie imploring his help. 'There is', he observed, 'of course only one possible answer and that is that if aggression arises out of the Entente with us and we are given an equal voice with the French in the negotiations which result in the attack, we will take our share in the fighting'. Mallet thought that there was no risk in making such an engagement as there 'would certainly

15. Grey to Bertie, 10 Jan.1906; Minute by Sanderson, 11 Jan. 1906; Cambon to Sanderson, 12 Jan.1906; B.D., iii, nos.210 and 212. When on 15 January Grey gave his official consent to the military conversations he insisted that the communications should not commit either government. Grey to Bertie, 15 Jan.1906, B.D., iii, no.215. The subject of the military conversations and Grey's communication of information about them to the cabinet is examined in K.Robbins, pp.144-150.

16. Grey to Bertie 10 Jan.1906, ibid. Grey to Bertie 15 Jan.1906, B.D., iii, no.216. Mallet to Bertie, 11 Jan.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 11 Jan.1906, D.D.F.2, viii, no.385.

be no war and we stand to gain heavily in France and everywhere by pursuing a logical course'. But, he warned Bertie: 'if we refuse...we lose at once all the Entente has given us - be looked upon as traitors by the French and needs be despised by the Germans'. Finally he requested Bertie to write a 'very strong personal letter to Grey', and to 'Prime C.Hardinge', who must 'supposing he agrees, do everything he can to buck up these miserable creatures'.¹⁷

Before Bertie could fulfill his colleague's request he learned from London that Holstein had recently predicted to Lascelles that if the conference were to fail the French would, relying on British support, attempt to create a fait accompli by invading Morocco.¹⁸ In a despatch of 13 January Bertie rejected this contention. He emphasized the peaceful intentions of the French, and explained to Grey that if they were to invade Morocco, this would not be the result of the discussions at Algeciras, but rather in order to meet an attack on their own territory. That, he observed, would either be spontaneous on the part of some Moorish tribe, or be promoted by the Germans with a view to giving them an excuse to resort to 'extreme measures'. If France did have to take defensive action in Morocco, and Germany treated it as provocation, then, Bertie concluded, 'it could only mean that she was seeking a pretext for War'.¹⁹

17. Mallet to Bertie, 11 Jan.1906, ibid. Already on 7 January Mallet had informed Geoffray, the French chargé d'affaires in London of the warning that Grey had given to Metternich on 3 January. Mallet added that in his personal opinion, 'le cabinet libéral n'aurait pas besoin de subir la pression de l'opinion pour marcher avec nous'. Geoffray to Rouvier, 7 Jan.1906, N.S.20 (A.A.E.), tel.10.

18. Lascelles to Grey, 13 Jan.1906, B.D., iii, no.241.

19. Bertie to Grey, 13 Jan.1906, B.D., iii, no.213. Sanderson also rejected Holstein's prediction. In a minute which is not published in the British Documents he observed: 'we know that the French have no such intention unless action is forced upon them'. Minute by Sanderson on Lascelles to Grey, 13 Jan.1906, F.O.371/171, tel.5.

Holstein may have been genuinely concerned lest the French, emboldened by assurances of British support, should prove unamenable to argument and diplomatic persuasion at the conference. Bertie, however, was anxious to dispel any idea that a pledge of British support would lead the French to adopt a more aggressive attitude. They were, he pointed out, already confident that England would for her own sake give France armed assistance in a Franco-German war. He contended that it was felt in France that if diplomacy failed to remove German opposition in Morocco the natural sequence would be that France would receive from her partner 'more than the diplomatic support that had proved insufficient for the purpose of the agreement'. If Grey could not assure the French of more than continuing diplomatic support or neutrality, there would be, he thought, a 'serious danger of a complete revulsion of feeling on the part of the French Government and of public opinion in France'.²⁰

The future of the entente was not all that concerned Bertie at this juncture. Both his despatch of 13 January and his subsequent correspondence indicate that he was also afraid that Germany would make gains which would be inimical to what he believed to be Britain's interests. Were Grey to refuse to go beyond the assurances which he had already given to Cambon, then, Bertie warned him, the French government would consider themselves deserted and might, 'in order to avoid risks of war without an ally deem it advisable to make great concessions to Germany outside of Morocco in order to obtain liberty of action in that country'. The French, he maintained, could not in these circumstances be expected to give much consideration to British imperial interests.²¹ Close collaboration with France was, he argued in a

20. Bertie to Grey, 13 Jan. 1906, ibid.

21. Ibid.

telegram of the 14th, essential if such an accommodation were to be avoided.²²

It is doubtful whether Bertie's argument could have carried much weight with Grey. Anxious though he was that the French should take Britain's interests in Morocco into account, he was not overwhelmingly opposed to making concessions to Germany there or elsewhere. He was prepared to give sympathetic consideration to the German acquisition of a port on Morocco's Atlantic coast, and he doubted if it were important for Britain to prevent them obtaining a coaling station in some other place. The moment might well come, he told the prime minister, 'when a timely admission that it is not a cardinal object of Britain's policy to prevent her having such a port may be of great value'.²³ What was probably of greater concern to Grey was the need to prevent a German descent on France, and it was upon this point that Eyre Crowe concentrated his attention. In a minute on Bertie's despatch, he claimed that the dominant factor in the situation was whether Germany was in a position at the moment to go to war with Britain and France. 'If she is not', he concluded, 'but is not, on the other hand disinclined to try conclusions with France alone, then clearly a promise of armed assistance from this country would be the means to preserve peace'.²⁴

Bertie's despatch did not in fact reach the foreign secretary until 18 January, and by that date Grey had already written to him to ask his views as his own were 'still in solution'. He rejected the idea of a promise in advance committing Britain to participation in a continental war for that would change the entente

22. Bertie to Grey, 14 Jan. 1906, B.D., iii, no. 242.

23. G.M. Trevelyan, Grey of Fallodon, being the life of Sir Edward Grey afterwards Viscount Grey of Fallodon (London, 1937), pp. 117-118.

24. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 13 Jan. 1906, no. 13, F.O. 371/70. Eyre Crowe was a senior clerk in the Foreign Office from 1906 until 1912 when he became an assistant under-secretary. From 1920 until 1925 he was permanent under-secretary.

into an alliance, and that would not be in accordance with British traditions. Nevertheless, he assured Bertie that in his opinion if a Franco-German war broke out over the agreement of 1904, Britain would not be able to stand aside. He went even further and gave Bertie details of the terms which the British government would require if they were to offer France a pledge of military support.²⁵

Grey's letter may well have encouraged Bertie to believe that Cambon might yet obtain the assurances which he desired. He paid little attention to the opening of the conversations between the British and French military authorities, whose purpose was to do no more than provide Britain with the option of aiding France in a continental war if the government so desired.²⁶ Of much greater interest to him was the question of whether Grey would promise more than continuing diplomatic support to France. Without drafting a reply to Grey's latest despatch, he left Paris on 18 January for a short stay in England.

Unfortunately there is no record of any talks which Bertie may have had with his colleagues in London during this visit, but he was along with Hardinge and the French ambassador a guest of the king at Windsor. There he informed Cambon of the nature, but not the substance, of his despatch to Grey of the 13th. According to Cambon's account, Bertie told him that the conclusions which he had reached were that a war between Germany and France alone would result in the collapse of France and a German hegemony in Europe. Belgium and Holland would fall subject to German

25. Grey to Bertie, 15 Jan. 1906, B.D., iii, no. 216.

26. On the subject of the military conversations Grey wrote to Lord Tweedmouth the first lord of the Admiralty on 16 January, 'We haven't promised any help, but it is quite right that our military and naval authorities should discuss the question in this way with the French and be prepared to give an answer when they are asked, or rather if they are asked'. Grey to Tweedmouth, 16 Jan. 1906, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/87.

influence, and England would sooner or later have to fight Germany, but without the benefit of French support.

What Cambon described as Bertie's conclusions were for the most part views which Bertie himself had attributed to the French. Indeed there is no mention in this record of Bertie having referred to the threat posed by Germany to Britain's imperial security, and it seems likely that he was simply trying to assure Cambon of the importance for Britain of maintaining an independent France. Bertie was quite frank, however, in his assessment of Cambon's chances of gaining any further commitment from the British government. To him he expressed his doubts as to whether Campbell-Bannerman and his Gladstonian colleagues would be prepared to commit Britain to participation in a future conflict. In any case, he warned Cambon, he would obtain nothing in writing. Cambon asserted that he did not want that. All he wished to know was 'si dans le cas d'une agression dont le Maroc pourrait être le prétexte mais dont le vrai motif serait notre entente avec l'Angleterre, l'Angleterre nous abandonnerait'. Given the tone of Grey's recent communications, Bertie was perhaps not too over optimistic in replying that it did not seem possible that 'on ne repondre pas affirmativement si vous posez la question dans ces termes'.²⁷ But Bertie was soon proved wrong.

In order to ensure early and effective co-operation in a war in which Britain and France were allies, Grey had approved the opening of joint military conversations. To deter German aggression he had delivered his warning to Metternich on 3 January. Beyond this he would not go. A plea made by Cambon on 31 January that in the event of a war resulting from German meddling in Morocco, British aid might be too late if it were necessary for

27. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 25 Jan.1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.1, no.55.

the government to consult and wait for public opinion to manifest itself did not cause Grey to alter his mind. He deprecated the idea of a verbal pledge as he would have to submit this to the cabinet, and he felt sure that they would require it in writing. Such an assurance, he reasoned, would amount to transforming the entente into an alliance. He explained to Cambon that he did not think that people in England would be prepared to risk a war in order to put France in possession of Morocco. If, however, it appeared that Germany were forcing a war on France in order to break up the entente, then, he observed, 'public opinion would undoubtedly be very strong on the side of France'. Nevertheless, he could not give a decided opinion as to whether this would be sufficient to overcome the 'great reluctance which existed amongst us now to find ourselves involved in a war'.²⁸

On 28 January Bertie returned to Paris, where he found the attention of the French concentrated upon the negotiations which had commenced on the 16th at Algeiras. Neither his private correspondence, nor the records of the Foreign Office reveal that he played a very conspicuous part in the determination of British policy towards Moroccan problem during the following month. Only when issues arose which seemed likely to call the entente into question did he become seriously involved in the business of the conference.

28. Grey to Bertie, 31 Jan. 1906, B.D., iii, no. 219. Grey may not have had any strong personal objections to the idea of an alliance with France at some date in the future. In September 1906 Hardinge commented on the entente: 'The present elastic situation is more satisfactory although the fact that we are not bound hand and foot to the French makes the latter nervous and suspicious'. Grey minuted on this: 'The difficulty of making an alliance with France now is that Germany might attack France at once, while Russia is helpless, fearing that when Russia recovered she (Germany) should be crushed by a new Triple Alliance against her. She might make an alliance between us and France a pretext for doing this as her only chance of saving her future'. Minutes by Hardinge and Grey, 15 Sept. 1906, B.D., iii, 489.

At Algeciras Franco-German differences crystallized on two issues: the future policing of the Moroccan ports, and the establishment of an international bank for Morocco.²⁹ Rather than concede to France and Spain the mandate which they desired for the organization of the police, Holstein would probably have preferred to see the conference fail.³⁰ But the seemingly contradictory statements of German diplomats did not allow foreign observers to reach any simple conclusions about their policies and intentions.³¹ When on 19 February Metternich informed Grey that his government had turned down the latest French proposal, the foreign secretary feared that he was about to see the early termination of the conference. In a memorandum which he drafted on the next day he ruminated that in that event Germany might try to establish her influence in Morocco, the French would counter them, and the Germans might make that a casus belli. Horrible though he thought Britain's involvement in a Franco-German war would be, he nevertheless emphasized that if she failed to support France in a conflict over Morocco, her honour and international standing would be seriously compromised.³²

29. S.L.Mayer, 'Anglo-German Rivalry at the Algeciras Conference' in Prosser Gifford and Wm.R.Louis(eds.), Britain and Germany in Africa, (London, 1967), pp.215-244.

30. N.Rich, pp.734-735.

31. Eyre Crowe thought that the German government intended 'to maintain as long as possible an ambiguous attitude'. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Nicolson to Grey, 6 Feb.1906, no.31 (published in B.D., iii, no.269 without Eyre Crowe's minute); minute by Eyre Crowe on Nicolson to Grey, 3 Feb.1906, no.27; Lister to Grey, 26 Jan.1906, no.37; Lister to Mallet, 26 Jan.1906, private, and minute by Eyre Crowe; F.O.371/71. Bertie to Grey, 31 Jan.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Revoil to Rouvier, 4 Feb.1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.1, no.120. Rapport de M.de Billy, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.2, 991-993.

32. Memorandum by Grey, 20 Feb.1906, B.D., iii, no.299. Grey also envisaged in this memorandum the possibility of France conceding to Germany a port or coaling station on Morocco's Atlantic coast. Although the Admiralty were prepared to accept this, the suggestion was vigorously opposed by Mallet. But Grey was probably more impressed by the anxious enquiries made of Hardinge by Paul Cambon about a rumour he had heard that Tweedmouth was prepared to abandon Mogador to Germany. Grey made the probability of French objections his reason for dropping the idea. Memorandum by Mallet, 26 Feb. 1906; Grey to Tweedmouth, 28 Feb.1906; Grey MSS., F.O.800/87. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 27 Feb.1906, D.D.F.2, ix, no.313.

It was in order to avoid creating a situation in which Britain's loyalty to the entente might be called into question by the French that Grey endeavoured to enlist Bertie's support in restraining the king from acting on his own initiative. King Edward, whose role in the determination of British foreign policy was often exaggerated in France, had recently adopted a friendlier attitude towards the German emperor. Indeed, he even agreed to arrange a meeting between himself and William II during the cruise which he was planning to take in the Mediterranean in the spring. This and the fact that he intended to spend a few days at Paris during March caused some consternation in the Foreign Office.³³

Pessimistic about the future of the conference, Grey wrote to Bertie on 2 March predicting that a meeting of the king and emperor so soon after its break up would have a very bad effect in France. The problem, Grey explained, was that the king thought that he could prepare the French for it on his way through Paris. But personally he thought that they were 'more likely to be alarmed than prepared', and he requested Bertie to use his influence to impress upon the king the risk that he was running of making a bad impression in France. 'If the Germans give way', he concluded, 'and the Conference comes to an agreement the meeting in the Mediterranean would be alright; but otherwise I dread the effect of it'.³⁴ In similar terms, Hardinge, Mallet, and Tyrrell

33. S. Lee, ii, 524-528. According to what the king told Bertie, Metternich had in January 1906, 'when matters did not look so bad', proposed a meeting with the emperor. He had, the king said, not desired a meeting. Bertie to Grey, 4 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. It is a measure of the influence that the French believed the king to exercise on British foreign policy that when in March 1906 Nicolson showed himself to be favourable to the idea of accepting the latest German concession as the basis of a settlement, the principal French delegate noted 'il serait possible que des nouvelles instructions marque une légère évolution du Roi Edouard vers l'Empereur d'Allemagne'. Journal of Paul Révoil, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.2, 931.

34. The king arrived at Cherbourg on 3 March, not, as Lee states on 4 March. S. Lee ii, 510. Grey to Bertie, 2 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

implored Bertie to use his influence with the king.³⁵

Bertie's first concern was with the reception that the French public would give to the news of a possible rendezvous between the two sovereigns, and on 4 March he presented the king with a memorandum containing his own views on the matter. He put it to the king that German diplomacy was working at Paris to make the French believe that England desired a Franco-German war in which France would be left in the lurch. Press reports emanating from Germany were, Bertie claimed, being used to indicate to the French that a rapprochement was being prepared between England and Germany without regard to France. The French government, public, and press, were coming to the conclusion, he observed, that William II's object was not only to oust France from her special position in Morocco, but to humble her, and prove that she could not in any circumstances rely on England for anything more than 'platonic diplomatic support'. It would, Bertie warned the king, 'very much alarm the French Government if they are allowed to believe that His Majesty intends to have a meeting with the Emperor irrespective of the results of the Algeciras Conference'. He thought that if Rouvier or Fallieres, the new president of the republic, raised the subject, then the king should say that no date had been fixed, nor would be until the question in discussion at Algeciras had been settled.³⁶

Bertie's recommendations were based on the assumption that the king would not possibly think of broaching the subject with

35. Tyrrell to Bertie, 2 March 1906, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184. Hardinge to Bertie, 2 March 1906; Mallet to Bertie, 2 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Knollys to Hardinge, 4 March 1906, Hardinge MSS., 9.

36. The recommendations made by Bertie in his memorandum were first put by him to the king on the evening of 3 March. Memorandum given by Bertie to the king, 4 March 1906, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184. Bertie to Grey, 4 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. C.Armand Fallières was president of the French republic from 1906 until 1913.

either Rouvier or Fallières in the present circumstances. Instead, Bertie contemplated the contingency where the question would be raised by French statesmen. This he thought was the best way of persuading the king, and he made no attempt to obtain from him any promise that he would accept his advice. The German emperor, Bertie told the king, could not take exception to receiving from him a reply analogous to that which he himself had given to the king of Spain in connexion with his promised visit to Madrid.³⁷

The ambassador's powers of persuasion were evidently successful for the king did not raise the subject in his conversations, and fortunately for the entente neither Rouvier nor Fallières alluded to it. Moreover, Bertie was also able to scotch an intrigue on the part of the German ambassador and his friends to arrange a meeting with the king.³⁸

The king left Paris for Biarritz on 6 March, and Bertie was to have joined him there on the 10th. But events both at Algeiras and Paris prevented this departure.³⁹

By the end of February it was already apparent to the German government that they had miscalculated in hoping for the support of the neutral powers at the conference. With the exception of the support given to them by their Austrian allies, they were diplomatically isolated, and to Bülow a compromise agreement with France seemed to be the only credible alternative to political defeat. After Holstein failed to obtain direct talks with the

37. Ibid. The German government had recently informed Madrid that the emperor could not fix a date for his official visit there until the outcome of the Algeiras conference had become clearer. J.Cambon to Rouvier, 21 Feb.1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.1. no. 254.

38. Bertie to Grey, 5 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.327. Bertie to Grey, 5 March 1906 and 9 March 1906; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

39. Bertie to Grey, 6 March 1906, no.95, F.O.371/71. Bertie to Grey, 9 March 1906, tel; Grey to Bertie, 9 March 1906, tel. Grey MSS., F.O.800/49. Mallet to Bertie, 9 March 1906, Bertie MSS., F.O.800/160.

French, Bülow on 6 March authorized the Austrians to put forward a project which conceded to the French almost everything for which they had asked with regard to the police. French and Spanish officers were, according to these proposals, to have control of the police at seven of the Moroccan ports, while at Casablanca the police force was to be under the control of a superior officer or inspector, who would be chosen from a minor power.⁴⁰

Although the majority of the powers represented at Algeciras regarded this as a major concession by Germany, Rouvier considered that the adoption of the proposals would mean introducing into Morocco an unacceptable element of internationalization. He was prepared to agree to the appointment of a Danish or Swiss inspector, but only on condition that he should have no authority over the police at Casablanca or over the instructors at other ports.⁴¹ A report which the Quai d'Orsay had recently received of a visit to Germany by the prince of Monaco did anyway indicate that the Wilhelmstrasse might be prepared to concede more. According to this account Bülow had told the prince that the conference was all a matter of saving face, and that there should be neither victors nor vanquished. Moreover, the emperor, it was reported, was prepared to accept as a basis for a settlement 'police franco-espagnole avec controle suisse discret qu'on

40. N. Rich, pp.739-740.

41. Bertie to Grey, 10 March 1906; Bertie to Grey, 11 March 1906, B.D. iii, nos.336 and 340.

voudra'.⁴²

Nicolson, the principal British delegate at the conference, was aware of the nature of the advice which the prince of Monaco had transmitted to Paris, but the impression which he derived from the German delegate was that Germany was determined that the ports should not be exclusively in French and Spanish hands.⁴³ Moreover to Grey and Nicolson it seemed evident that if a French refusal to accept the Austrian project were to lead to the break down of the negotiations, this would be blamed by the other powers upon France and her associates.⁴⁴ Grey might then have to reckon with a cabinet and public which would be reluctant to give further support to France. Nicolson, who doubted if the Germans would give way again, advised his French colleague that it would be unfortunate if Britain, France, and Spain were left isolated.⁴⁵ In London Hardinge, who found the Austrian scheme 'a complete justification of M. Delcassé's policy and of a policy of resistance to German bluff', suggested that Grey should repeat Nicolson's advice to Cambon.⁴⁶ With this Grey agreed. It did not seem

42. Note from Joseph Reinach, 8 March 1906, D.D.F.2, ix.pt.2, no.392. There is in the private papers of Reinach another version of this note and a telegram from the Prince of Monaco's secretary of 6 March 1906 which informed Reinach from Berlin: 'on fera bien de prendre aucune resolution importante avant notre retour demain car notre voyageur parait satisfait du resultat'. When the Germans appeared to be less ready to pursue the conciliatory line that the prince had hoped for, he attributed this to the change of government in France. This he thought had led the Germans to believe that the French would be less fixed in their ideas 'car j'apportais de Berlin une certitude totale en faveur d'un arrangement'. Lamotte to Reinach, 6 March 1906 tel; note by Reinach (on paper headed 'affaires étrangères, cabinet du ministre'), 8 March 1906; Prince Albert of Monaco to Reinach, 14 March 1906; Reinach MSS., (B.N.), N.A.Fr., 13550.

43. Nicolson to Grey, 12 March 1906, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/357. Nicolson to Grey, 11 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.339. Bertie appears to have had no knowledge of the Prince of Monaco's intervention. When Rouvier appeared confident that the Germans would yield further, Bertie assumed that perhaps some promise had been given privately by the German emperor to the Russian emperor, and that this had been passed on to Paris. Bertie to Grey, 11 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

44. Grey to Nicolson, 10 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.335. Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 10 March 1906, Campbell-Bannerman MSS., Add. 41218.

45. Nicolson to Grey, 9 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.332.

46. Minute by Hardinge on Nicolson to Grey, 8 March 1906, F.O.371/173, tel.89.

to him that any real sacrifice of principle was involved in accepting the proposals and on 9 March he informed the French ambassador that they 'represented a real concession on the part of Germany, and had brought agreement so near that it would not do to let the Conference break up now without a settlement'. In a telegram of the same date he instructed Bertie to communicate these views to Rouvier.⁴⁷

Bertie was more cautious than either Grey or Hardinge in his reception of the news from Algeciras, and he was much less inclined than they were to regard the Germans as having conceded anything of value.⁴⁸ Moreover, when on 10 March he put Grey's views to Rouvier, he found him confident that he could modify the Austrian project so as to suit the needs of France. To Grey Bertie explained:

The opinion generally held in Paris is that all the concessions have been from the French side and that moderation has not really been shown by Germany, for after Oriental fashion she began by making impossible demands, and their reduction in view of almost universal disapproval of them to something less offensive to France is not real moderation.⁴⁹

Inside the Foreign Office the French objections attracted the sympathy of Eyre Crowe. But he, like Hardinge and Nicolson, feared that the Germans would not be prepared to give way again.⁵⁰ While Grey assured Cambon that Nicolson would continue to support Révoil, the French delegate at Algeciras, he also urged the French to accept a Swiss police command at Casablanca rather than let the conference break up.⁵¹ This brought forth an immediate protest

47. Grey to Bertie, 9 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.333.

48. Bertie to Mallet, 10 Jan.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

49. Bertie to Grey, 11 Jan.1906, ibid.

50. Minutes by Eyre Crowe and Hardinge on Nicolson to Grey, 9 March 1906, F.O.371/173, tel.90 (published without minutes as B.D. iii, 332). Bertie to Grey, 10 March 1906; Nicolson to Grey, 11 March 1906; Bertie to Grey, 11 March 1906; B.D. iii, nos.336, 339 and 340.

51. Grey to Nicolson, 12 March 1906, B.D. iii, no.344. Paul Révoil was the French ambassador at Berne from 1905 until 1907, and France's representative at the Algeciras conference.

from the Paris embassy. In a letter of 12 March Bertie warned Grey of the unfortunate impression that would be created in France once the public there learned that he had urged their government to give way on Casablanca. He observed to Grey that if the French government followed his advice they would say that they were doing so because of English pressure. Then, Bertie predicted, it would become a 'cry encouraged by Germany of save us from our friends'.⁵²

The situation was complicated by France's domestic affairs. On 7 March after a debate affecting the separation of the church and state, Rouvier was defeated in the chamber. Although he remained at the Quai d'Orsay for another five days, he resigned as premier, and on 14 March a new government was formed with Jean Sarrien as president of the council, and Leon Bourgeois as foreign minister. From the start the new ministry appeared to be an unstable combination. Its formation had according to Bertie been hampered by Bourgeois's objection to the appointment of Georges Clemenceau as minister of the interior. Moreover, Bourgeois had represented France at the Hague peace conference, and was a fervent partisan of international arbitration and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Not that in Bertie's opinion this was likely to produce any great changes in French foreign policy. Any disposition which Bourgeois might show in the direction of conciliation would, he thought, be checked by Clemenceau, who had 'decided views on questions of foreign policy'.⁵³ But whatever stance the

52. Bertie to Grey, 8 March 1906, no.98; 9 March 1906, tel.15; 10 March 1906, tels.16 and 18; 12 March 1906, tel.21; 14 March 1906, no.101; F.O.371/71. Bertie to Grey, 12 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

53. Bertie to Grey, 12 March 1906, F.O.371/71, despt.no.103. Clemenceau subsequently complained to Bertie of Bourgeois' indecisiveness in the conduct of foreign policy. Bertie to Hardinge, 20 July 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Bertie to Grey, 11 Oct. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Jean-Marie Ferdinand Sarrien remained president of the council until the autumn of 1906 when he was succeeded by Clemenceau. Leon Bourgeois left the Quai d'Orsay when Sarrien resigned.

new government might take, the forthcoming French elections left British observers with reason to speculate about what France's future policy might be.

Initially the uncertain state of French politics helped to reinforce Bertie's case. He pointed out on 11 March that since Rouvier would soon be out of office, it was natural that he should not wish to make concessions and thereby 'incur reproaches in the Chamber from his successors and the odium of the country'.⁵⁴ In a conversation with Nicolson, Révoil explained that if Grey's warning were to transpire, the nationalists and others might declare against the entente at the elections. Eyre Crowe agreed that the British government 'ought to be most careful on the eve of a general election in France not to appear as the prime movers in persuading France to accept an arrangement which will certainly meet with strong opposition in France'. Instead, he suggested that all they should do was to put to France the necessity of choosing between the Austrian proposals and no arrangement at all.⁵⁵

An interview which Nicolson undertook at Révoil's request with Radowitz the German Delegate had in the meanwhile confirmed him in his belief that the Germans would not yield further.⁵⁶

54. Eyre Crowe minuted on Bertie's despatch of 11 March: 'It seems to me of real importance that Great Britain should carefully guard against arousing any suspicion on the part of the new French government of having been practically "captured" by Germany'. Bertie to Grey, 11 March 1906, F.O.371/173, despt.no.104, and minute by Eyre Crowe. (published without minute as B.D.iii, no.340).

55. Nicolson to Grey, 12 March 1906, and minute by Eyre Crowe, B.D.iii, no.340.)

56. By 12 March Nicolson was 'much troubled by the outlook'. He wrote to Hardinge that Révoil had been prepared to accept the Austrian proposals with some modifications 'but was unluckily "got at" by the excitable French correspondents who influenced him into believing that he would be weak to accept the inspectors at Casablanca; and they dinned into him much nonsensical talk of the "drapeau" and French officers being inspected by a Swiss and so on'. Nicolson to Hardinge, 12 March 1906, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/337. Nicolson to Grey, 11 March 1906 and 13 March 1906, B.D., iii, nos.341 and 345. Joseph von Radowitz was German ambassador at Madrid from 1892 until 1908 and principal German delegate at the Algeiras conference.

Yet neither he nor Grey made their support for France dependent upon the French adopting a particular course. Indeed, Grey, who remained convinced that the French were mistaken in not settling on the basis of the Austrian proposals, was perturbed by a claim by Metternich that all the delegates 'including Nicolson' had told Radowitz that the French ought to 'concede the small points still outstanding'.⁵⁷ On 14 March after the publication in Le Temps of what he purported to be Rouvier's final instructions to Révoil not to give way on Casablanca, Grey affirmed to Bertie his continuing support for France.⁵⁸

Grey's pledge, which Bertie delivered to Louis, the political director of the Quai d'Orsay, on the afternoon of the 14th, relieved the new minister of the anxiety which he and his colleagues had evidently felt over the attitude of the British government and their representatives at Algeciras.⁵⁹ Reports emanating from Berlin had indicated that the British and German delegates were in accord, and from Révoil Bourgeois had learned that Nicolson believed himself to be in a position to negotiate an understanding with Radowitz. This gave the foreign minister cause to wonder whether Nicolson had already come to an agreement with Radowitz, and whether

57. Grey to Lascelles, 13 March 1906; Grey to Nicolson, 14 March 1906; B.D.iii, nos. 348 and 351. Minutes by Eyre Crowe, Barrington, and Hardinge on Bertie to Grey, 11 March 1906, F.O.371/173, despt. no.104. (published on B.D.iii, no.340, without minutes).

58. Grey to Bertie, 14 March 1906, B.D., iii, 350 and 352. Grey was surprised and irritated by the publication in Le Temps which he told Paul Cambon could only upset the negotiations at Algeciras. P.Cambon to Bourgeois, 14 March 1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.2, no.443. Grey wrote on 15 March to Lord Cromer: 'A week ago the French in my opinion secured a chance of coming to an agreement at Algeciras, getting the substance of what they wanted, gaining time which is on their side and closing the conference, if not with éclat, at any rate with great credit to themselves. But they overran the point and now I don't know how things will end'. Grey to Cromer, 15 March 1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/46.

59. Bertie to Grey, 15 March 1906, F.O.371/174, tel.27. Bourgeois to Révoil, 14 March 1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.2, no.440. Georges Louis was the director of political affairs at the ministry of foreign affairs from 1905 until 1908 when he succeeded Bompard as France's ambassador to Russia.

this was an indication of a change of attitude on Britain's part.⁶⁰ Apparently with his approval, Crozier, the French minister at Copenhagen, told Lister of Bourgeois's fears. He warned Lister that several influential and competent French parliamentarians had in the past few days tried to persuade the foreign minister that the policy of the British government was to withdraw from continental politics into an isolation favoured by Campbell-Bannerman.⁶¹

Bourgeois's misgivings were shared by others inside the French cabinet. When Etienne, who was now the minister of war, met Bertie at a party at the German embassy on 14 March, he practically accused Britain of intending to abandon France at Algeiras. Moreover, according to Clemenceau, who visited Bertie on the following day, he alone had combatted the supposition which had been raised in the council of ministers that England had made a separate arrangement with Germany.⁶² Even Cambon, who

60. Some confusion over Nicolson's conduct may have arisen in Bourgeois' mind as the result of Révoil's reporting from Algeiras. Révoil could personally find nothing to complain of in Nicolson's diplomacy, and he admitted to Bourgeois on 15 March that the British delegate had taken no initiative on the subject of Casablanca. He had neither allowed the Germans to believe that he favoured the Austrian proposals, nor given them reason to think that the French would agree. Talks between himself and Nicolson on a possible solution had, Révoil noted, been kept in confidence. Unfortunately, none of these explanations had figured in an account telegraphed by Révoil on 13 March to the Quai d'Orsay. There Révoil stated that Nicolson had learnt from Radowitz that the Germans had said their last word, and he urged his government to accept a modified version of the Austrian project. Nicolson, he had observed, 'se croit en mesure de négocier utilement l'entente sur ces bases avec M.de Radowitz'. Révoil to Douvrie, 13 March 1906; and 15 March 1906; Bourgeois to Révoil, 14 March 1906; D.D.F.2, ix.pt.2, nos.439,440 and 450. Journal of Révoil, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.2, 930-940. Bertie to Grey, 16 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.358.

61. Bertie to Grey, 15 March 1906, B.D.iii, no.355. Bertie to Grey, 17 March 1906, cited in Lord Grey of Fallodon, Twenty-five Years, 1892-1916, (2 vols, London, 1925), i, 105-110.

62. Bertie to Grey, 15 March 1906, tel., Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bertie to Grey, 15 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.356. Bertie to Edward VII, 16 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

felt sure that Grey would continue his support of France, warned Bourgeois that the British foreign secretary would be obliged to take into account the views of his cabinet colleagues, who might disinterest themselves in France if she appeared to endanger the success of the conference.⁶³ But the French reaction to the advice proffered by himself and Nicolson was resented by Grey. After verifying that his views had been correctly transmitted by Cambon to the Quai d'Orsay, he objected to Bertie: 'It is too bad of the French to run off the rails like this'. 'A nation', he observed, 'which is always suspecting her friend will never be able to keep her friend'.

Grey admitted to Bertie that French suspicions of Britain might be due to France's 'bad luck' during the past thirty five years, but he estimated that as a result of Russia recovering her strength, and the betterment of Anglo-Russian relations, France would in two or three years 'be in the strongest position she had been in for several generations'. Yet, he concluded

...to bring all this about people must be content to go slow and not to get jumpy and throw over the Foreign Minister and change their Government every few months and tak nonsense at the German Embassy and send their Minister at Copenhagen to make nervous enquiries at the Embassy in Paris before they have consulted their ambassador in London.⁶⁴

Bertie showed no sympathy for Grey's exasperation. Often prejudiced in his judgement of Germany, and dogmatic in his defence of Britain's imperial interests, he nevertheless possessed a fair degree of insight into the workings of the French political

63. P.Cambon, to Bourgeois, 15 March 1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.2, no.449.

64. Grey to Bertie, 15 March 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160 (part of this letter is published as B.D., iii, no.353).

mind. On 17 March he responded to Grey's protests with a sermon on toleration.

One must take the French as they are (Bertie observed) and not as one would wish them to be. They have an instinctive dread of Germany and an hereditary distrust of England, and with these characteristics they are easily led to believe that they may be deserted by England and fallen upon by Germany.

The Germans, he admitted, had no doubt made concessions, but France too, he thought, had already given way a good deal.

Bertie regretted that 'Frenchmen of education and position should be found ready to believe imputations against England of bad faith'. Their distrust, he thought, had been played upon by those working in the interests of Germany. Moreover, he assumed that Bourgeois had sent Crozier to Listeri in order to gain assurances with which to combat the views of his colleagues, who were unfamiliar with the details of recent diplomacy. As to the alarm felt by the French cabinet, that he attributed to Révoil having reported that he supposed Nicolson's advice to denote a change in policy. Some members of the government, he suggested, had been inclined to believe in the existence of an Anglo-German arrangement because of the apparent inconsistency between Britain's willingness to acquiesce in the Austrian project as it affected Casablanca, and the message which he himself had delivered to Delcasse on 25 April 1905.⁶⁵

In the end the net outcome of this episode was a fresh re-affirmation by Grey of his intention to stand by France. 'Cordial co-operation with France in all parts of the world', Grey wrote to Bertie on 15 March, 'remains a cardinal point of British policy and ⁱⁿ some respects we have carried ^{it} further than the late Government were required to do'.⁶⁶ During the remainder of the

65. Bertie to Grey, 17 March 1906 cited in Grey of Fallodon, i, 105-110. Bertie to Grey, 16 March 1906, B.D.iii, no.358. Bertie to Edward VII, 16 March 1906, op.cit.

66. With reference to Etienne Grey observed: 'It is appropriate that his misgivings should have found expression to you in the very place where it possibly had its origin'. Grey to Bertie, 15 March 1906, B.D., iii, no.357.

the month Grey continued to back France on the police question, and on 26 March in the face of Anglo-French firmness, the Germans climbed down.⁶⁷ By the general act of Algeciras of 7 April France and Spain secured the control of the police at all eight Moroccan ports with the proviso that those at Casablanca and Tetuan should be mixed, and a Swiss Officer be appointed by the Sultan as inspector. It provided also for the establishment of a state bank, which would be open to the capital of all nations, but with special concessions to France.⁶⁸

During the Algeciras conference the maintenance of the Anglo-French understanding had in Bertie's opinion tended to coincide with the defence of Britain's interests in Morocco. But when elsewhere in Africa French policies seemed to augment rather than diminish what he believed to be the menace of German intervention, Bertie was less inclined to a pose as the guardian of French susceptibilities. This explains his attitude towards the negotiations which since the spring of 1904 had been proceeding between Britain, France, and Italy for an agreement on Abyssinia. Through such an accord the three powers sought to delimit their respective interests in the country, and provide for a common stance in the event of the death of Emperor Menelek being followed by civil disorders and the break-up of his realm.⁶⁹

67. On 17 March Nicolson informed Grey that Radowitz had modified his tone with regard to the police and gave him to understand that Germany had not said her last word. On Nicolson's despatch Eyre Crowe minuted: 'Germany is prepared to make further concessions. That being so, France was evidently right in holding out'. Nicolson to Grey, 17 March 1906, F.O.371/174, tel.104, and minute by Eyre Crowe, (published as B.D., iii, no.359 without minute).

68. E.Anderson, pp.392-396.

69. For the history of these negotiations see: Memorandum on the position of England, France and Italy in Abyssinia, 11 Dec.1905, B.D., viii, no.9. French interests in Abyssinia were centred upon the construction of a railway between Djibouti and the interior the concession for which had been granted by the Emperor Menelek to a French controlled company. K.Eubank, Paul Cambon, Master Diplomatist (Oklahoma, 1960), 117-120. Cromer to Grey, 1 Jan.1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.1. Harrington to Grey, 20 Jan.1906, F.O.371/1, tel.1. P.Cambon to Lansdowne, 9 Jan.1905; Lansdowne to P.Cambon, 13 Jan. 1905; enclosed in Lansdowne to Bertie, 13 Jan.1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

Bertie had while ambassador at Rome recommended to the Foreign Office that they should settle with Italy on the future of Abyssinia with a view to deterring French interference there.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, after March 1905, he like Lansdowne and Paul Cambon began to fear the possibility of German meddling at Addis Ababa. For this reason he urged upon his colleagues the need for a speedy conclusion of a tripartite arrangement.⁷¹ This, however, was far from easy to achieve, for even after Britain and France had succeeded in agreeing on the terms of a draft convention, there remained the problem of securing Italy's adherence.⁷² Moreover, after Algeciras Bourgeois began to have doubts about the wisdom of proceeding with the draft accord. He told Bertie on 29 May that France could only conclude an agreement on the subject of railway concessions in Abyssinia for to do more would be to risk German intervention. Germany, he contended, might appear in the same guise as she had done in Morocco, and claim that the proposed tripartite agreement was a preliminary to the partition of Abyssinia.⁷³

70. Bertie to Lansdowne, 20 Sept. 1903, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bertie put it to Lansdowne in October 1903: 'Italians may not be desirable concessionaries, but as concerns British interests would not Italians be more acceptable to us than Frenchmen, Germans or Russians?' Bertie to Lansdowne, 14 Oct. 1903, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/133.

71. Bertie to Mallet, 12 April 1905, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bertie to Mallet, 28 May 1905, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184. From Egypt Lord Cromer, the consul general, also urged upon Grey the need for a speedy settlement. He predicted that otherwise the 'end of all this will be that the tertius gaudens in the shape of Germany, will step in and get a considerable slice of the pudding'. Cromer to Grey, 13 April 1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/46.

72. Grey to Harrington, 23 Jan. 1906, F.O.371/1, tel.3. Egerton to Grey, 3 March 1906, F.O.371/1, tel.22. Tittoni to Grey, 12 April 1906 and 19 April 1906, F.O.371/1. Grey to Cromer, 25 May 1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.86. Grey to Cromer, 17 Jan. 1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/46. Paul Cambon suspected that the Italians were being influenced in their attitude towards an Abyssinian agreement by Germany's policy in Morocco. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 24 Jan. 1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.1, no.49.

73. Bertie to Bourgeois, 28 May 1906; Bertie to Grey, 29 May, 1906; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bourgeois to P.Cambon, 28 May 1906, D.D.F.2, x. no.81. Clemenceau explained to Bertie in June that Bourgeois had imagined that the agreement as originally drafted might have committed France to a military intervention in Abyssinia in order to restore order there. Bertie to Grey, 29 June 1906, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184.

Neither Grey nor Bertie were impressed by Bourgeois's case, especially as an agreement limited to railway concessions would benefit France, but leave Britain without a quid pro quo. Such an arrangement, Grey thought, would not disarm German hostility, since they were bound to suspect that either there was something behind it, or that it was the first step towards a larger scheme. If fear of Germany were Bourgeois's main objection, then he considered it might be overcome by explaining to her that she was not a power limitrophe of Abyssinia, and that the agreement contained provisions safeguarding the freedom of commerce. The 'bold course', Grey observed to Bertie in a letter of 1 June, would be to make a clean job of the whole matter by signing without consulting Germany. Yet as Bourgeois was reluctant to do that, Grey proposed that there should be a complete change of policy and that Germany should be taken into account.⁷⁴

This proposal attracted a predictable protest from Bertie, If it suited Germany's purpose then Bertie did not think that any amount of explanation would satisfy her. To sign without consulting Germany, he explained, 'would not only be the bold course but the wisest course to adopt'. The idea of offering an explanation to her would, he reckoned, 'be almost tantamount to an admission that she is to be consulted by us in regard to matters which in no way concern her'. He fulminated:

It would encourage her to consider herself the arbiter of the world. France may be moved by fear of Germany to not doing anything of any importance in any part of the globe without German acquiescence, but there is no reason why we should at present occupy this position.

He was equally opposed to allowing French procrastination to delay further the conclusion of the agreement. Indeed, faced with

74. Grey to Bertie, 1 June 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

Bourgeois's reservations and the risk of German intrigues, Bertie's solution was unequivocal and expedient. He recommended to Grey that Italy should be brought to signing point, and the French then be informed that 'we cannot wait any longer and that we shall initial the draft with the Italians and leave the agreement open to French adherence'. In such circumstances he believed the French would sign.⁷⁵

Grey agreed that the course suggested by Bertie with regard to informing Germany and other powers was the best one. He insisted, however, that Britain's policy must be dependent on the course chosen by Bourgeois, and he completely ignored Bertie's suggestion with regard to bringing pressure to bear on France.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Italy's conditional acceptance of the draft convention on 7 June did little to change Bourgeois's mind, and in these circumstances Bertie seems to have decided to act on his own initiative.⁷⁷ On 21 June he warned the foreign minister that it might be necessary for England and Italy to sign the agreement, and for them to leave it to France to join later.

Bertie had certainly exceeded the instructions which he had received from Grey, and news of his action was not favourably received in London. Grey thought it 'was going too far', and Hardinge considered it a dangerous move which 'might have been resented'.⁷⁸ Yet it probably served well to reinforce the advice

75. Bertie to Grey, 3 June 1906, Grey MSS, F.O.800/51. Bertie had suggested a similar course to Paul Cambon, when in January 1906 Italy's procrastination had appeared to be the chief obstacle in the way of an agreement. He then suggested to Cambon that he should propose to Grey that Britain and France should sign the projected agreement. P.Cambon to Rouvier, 24 Jan.1906 and 28 Feb. 1906, D.D.F.2, ix, pt.1, nos.49 and 322.

76. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 3 June 1906, ibid. Grey to Bertie, 8 June 1906, and 19 June 1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.311 and tel87.

77. Grey to Egerton, 7 June 1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.89.

78. Bertie to Grey, 21 June 1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.249, and minutes by Grey and Hardinge.

which Bourgeois had already received from Paul Cambon that if France failed to sign it would strike 'un coup sensible a cette entente cordiale avec l'Angleterre qui constitue pour nous une garantie essentielle de securite'. Visits to Paris by Tittoni, the Italian foreign minister, on 22 June, and Cambon on 25 June clinched the affair.⁷⁹ After modifications were made in the text, which were largely to Italy's benefit and at Britain's expense, the convention was initialled on 6 July.⁸⁰

Both the concern which Bertie had voiced in March over Grey's reaction to the Austrian proposals, and the warning which he had given to Bourgeois on 21 June were consistent with his belief that it was neither wise nor necessary to seek to placate Germany. He greeted with a distinct lack of enthusiasm, and at times outright hostility, the official and unofficial efforts which were made during 1906 to better Anglo-German relations. In the spring of 1906 visits to England by a group of German burgomasters, and a party of German journalists were accompanied by a good deal of talk in the press about the need for an Anglo-German understanding.⁸¹ When, however, on 11 July Radolin asked Bertie whether relations between Britain and Germany were not improved, he received the somewhat dispassionate reply that the press in both countries was better, that the 'visits' had been

79. P.Cambon to Bourgeois, 7 June 1906; and 5 July 1906; D.D.F.2, x, nos.93 and 136. P.Cambon to H.Cambon, 13 June 1906, Correspondance ii, 219-220.

80. Grey to Lister, 4 July 1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.354. Grey to Bertie, 6 July 1906, F.O.371/1, despt.no.362. F.O.371/1. British and Foreign State Papers, ic, 486-489. The tripartite agreement was finally signed on 13 December 1906.

81. But the Paris press appears to have paid little attention to these visits. Grahame to Grey, 2 July 1906, F.O.371/73; despt. no.264.

useful in their way, and there were not at present any important questions at issue between the two governments which were likely to cause difficulties.⁸²

During this period Grey's conduct gave Bertie little to complain about. Whatever hopes the foreign secretary may have nurtured for securing a better relationship with Germany, it seems clear that he was embarrassed by the unofficial manifestations of Anglo-German friendship. In public and in private he and his officials were profuse in their assurances of continuing British support for the entente with France.⁸³ But Bertie, Mallet, and Tyrrell were disturbed by Hardinge's readiness to support a more conciliatory approach towards Berlin. Anxious to see an end to the 'continual back-biting' between Britain and Germany, he supported a meeting between the king and the German emperor, and in August 1906 he accompanied Edward VII on a journey to Cronberg. There he was favourably impressed by the attitude of von Tschirschky, the German foreign secretary, who spoke to him of his desire that Britain should help diminish the distrust in relations between France and Germany.⁸⁴ Mallet, however, believed that German

82. Bertie to Grey, 12 July 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

83. Grey to Fallodon, i, 113-116, Lister to Grey, 21 May 1906; Lascelles to Grey, 24 May 1906, and minutes by Eyre Crowe and Grey; Minutes by Eyre Crowe, Barrington, Hardinge and Grey, 26 June 1906; Grey to Bertie, 9 July 1906; Bertie to Grey, 12 July 1906; Grey to Bertie, 8 Nov. 1906; B.D.iii, nos. 414, 416, 419, 420, 421 and 442. Grey told Valentine Chirol that 'he had repeatedly told the Germans that our relations with Berlin must depend largely upon the relations between Berlin and Paris'. Chirol to Nicolson, 3 July 1906; Carnock MSS., F.O.800/338. Geoffray to Bourgeois, 9 July 1906; P. Cambon to Bourgeois, 13 July 1906; D.D.F.2, x, nos. 144 and 158.

84. Hardinge to Grey, 16 Aug. 1906, B.D.iii, no. 425. S. Lee, ii, 329-531. Hardinge to Nicolson, 21 Aug. 1906, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/338. Mallet informed Bertie on 24 August that he had heard from Tyrrell that Hardinge thought the Germans 'sincerely anxious to be friends'. Mallet to Bertie, 24 Aug. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. In the autumn of 1906 hostility towards Germany within the Foreign Office seems to have been less apparent than before. Fitzmaurice to Lascelles, 21 Sept. 1906, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/13. Heinrich von Tschirschky und Boegendorff was German foreign secretary from 1906 until 1907 when he was appointed German ambassador at Vienna.

protestations of friendship were aimed simply at dividing Britain and France, and Bertie, who held a similar view, was scathing in his criticism of Hardinge. From Bagnolles-de-l'Orne, where he was on holiday, he wrote to Mallet:

"Quem William vult perdere prius dementat". Whenever the anaesthetic takes effect we shall be operated on. When we wake up we shall find we were fools to believe what the surgeon said and that we are crippled.

Shocked by Hardinge, of whose intelligence he 'would have thought better', Bertie proposed to Mallet: 'send him to Berlin, vice Lascelles promoted to Rome, and appoint Egerton to Hardinge's present post'.⁸⁵

Bertie viewed with no less apprehension the decision of Haldane, who visited Berlin at the end of August, to attend a military review and dinner there on 1 September. The date was sufficiently close to the anniversary of Sedan on the 2nd to cause Bourgeois to suspect that a British cabinet minister was to be present at the celebration of the French defeat.⁸⁶ On 28 August Cambon warned Grey that Haldane's attendance at the review and dinner would lead to a campaign in the French press, backed by German agents, against Haldane and the British government.⁸⁷ Apparently under the impression that Bertie's relations with the king would enable him to influence Haldane, Bourgeois had his officials inform the British ambassador of his views.⁸⁸ It was fortunate that he did so for owing to an omission on the part of the private secretary's department Bertie had received no warning about Cambon's protest. When on 30 August he did learn from Soulange Bodin, a sous-directeur of the Quai d'Orsay, of the French objections, he was quick to vent his displeasure over both

85. Bertie to Mallet, 25 Aug.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

86. Bourgeois to P.Cambon, 25 Aug.1906, D.D.F.2, x, no.190.

87. Grey to Haldane, 28 Aug.1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/101.

P.Cambon to Bourgeois, 28 Aug.1906, D.D.F.2, x, no.191.

the administrative error and Haldane's intentions. To Grey he observed:

If we were in the habit of celebrating a Fashoda anniversary the French would take it very ill if the Spanish Minister of War joined in our festivities of commemoration. They would have the same feeling as regards the presence of Mr. Haldane in connection with their defeat at Sedan.⁸⁹

A week later on 6 September he reminded Grey that the nationalist party and many royalists in France had been in favour of an understanding with Germany, and that an agitation for such a policy might easily be started again if the French public were led to suspect that the British government contemplated an Anglo-German agreement on general policy.⁹⁰

Neither Bertie nor Cambon had any serious influence on the course of events. The French objections were in Grey's view 'too wholesale', especially as this was 'the time of the year apparently for manoeuvres and reviews'.⁹¹ Moreover, although he suggested to Haldane that if he could not avoid being present at the review and dinner the visit had better be abandoned, Haldane claimed that there was no connection between the functions he was to attend and Sedan, and proceeded with his programme.⁹²

During Haldane's stay in Berlin the suggestion was again made that England should through the entente help to facilitate a Franco-German rapprochement. The September edition of the Deutsche Revue went further, and in an article which Bertie attributed to official inspiration, denounced the policy of 'counterpoises' represented by the entente. Instead it suggested that Germany should be included in the circle of friendship.

89. Bertie to Grey, 30 Aug. 1906; Bertie to Tyrell, 6 Sept. 1906; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Bertie to Grey, 30 Aug. 1906 and 31 Aug. 1906, F.O.371/78, tels. 76 and 78.

90. Bertie to Grey, 6 Sept. 1906, B.D.iii, no.437.

91. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 30 Aug. 1906, F.O.371/78, tel. 76. On 3 September Grey wrote to Haldane: 'The French have of course taken this much too seriously and made a mountain out of it. I hope that Bourgeois has over-rated the effect it is likely to have on the French press and public opinion; if so the incident will pass and be forgotten'. Sommer, p.180. Granville to Lascelles 5 Oct. 1906, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/15.

92. Grey to Haldane, 28 Aug. 1906; Ponsonby to Lascelles, 2 Sept., 1906, Lascelles MSS., F.O.800/15.

Bertie, however, could see nothing but danger in trying to persuade the French to come to terms with Germany, for, he contended, 'it would be taken as an attempt to persuade the mouse to make friends with the cat, and be regarded as covering some secret designs arranged with Germany'. He concluded:

It appears to me that our policy as regards relations between France and Germany should be not to create friction as was Prince Bismarck's practice in regard to relations between France and England; but to do nothing to facilitate an understanding between Germany and France; for it is difficult to conceive how an understanding of any real importance between these two countries could be satisfactory without being detrimental to our interests.⁹³

The existing political constellation in Europe was a favourable one for Britain. Bertie could see no reason for seeking to change it.

Hardinge's apparent readiness to accept German assurances of goodwill at face value set him apart from Bertie during the summer of 1906. In the autumn the two friends also differed over an administrative issue. Their quarrel arose out of the irritation felt by Hardinge about the persistent complaints made by Bertie with regard to the delays and other errors which occurred in the Foreign Office's handling of communications with the Paris embassy.⁹⁴ Matters came to a head at the beginning of October when Bertie wrote privately to Hardinge to object about the repetition of a telegram to Paris which had been meant for Rome. The problem was a trivial one, and Hardinge resented the tone of the letter in which Bertie dispensed with his usual introduction of 'My dear Charlie', and used the less familiar 'My dear Hardinge'.⁹⁵ Annoyed at Bertie's criticism of his staff, he replied:

I know that you are a model of perfection and never made a mistake even when you first joined the F.O., but as the very

93. Bertie to Grey, 6 Sept. 1906, B.D., iii, no. 437.

94. Bertie to Hardinge, 31 Jan. 1906; 10 March 1906; 14 March 1906; 27 Oct. 1906; 12 Dec. 1906; Bertie to Eyre Crowe, 22 July 1906; Hardinge to Bertie, 12 March 1906; 15 March 1906; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184.

95. Hardinge to Bertie, 12 Oct. 1906, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184.

excellent and hard-working attachés in the Eastern Department have not yet arrived at the same pitch of perfection one of them I hear repeated Elliot's 67 to Paris instead of to Rome... if they never do anything worse than that, I have hope of them attaining some day your standard of perfection.

In Hardinge's opinion the question should have been left to a letter from the head of chancery at Paris to the Foreign Office department concerned. It should not, he thought, have been the subject of a formal letter from an ambassador to the head of the Foreign Office.⁹⁶

Bertie was disquieted and surprised by Hardinge's response. It was not a 'proper' letter to send a friend, he observed, and he hoped it was 'chaff'.⁹⁷ But while Hardinge was prepared to apologise he explained to Bertie on 12 October that it was the first time that he had seen an ambassador act in Bertie's manner.⁹⁸ Moreover, although Bertie accepted that it was not for him or Hardinge 'to lecture each other on our respective duties', he did not desist from meddling in the affairs of the Foreign Office.⁹⁹

After October only the desire of the king to have Hardinge appointed ambassador at Washington caused any serious menace to his close relations with Bertie. King Edward's proposal was, however, successfully resisted by Grey, who insisted that Hardinge was 'invaluable' and must therefore remain in London.¹⁰⁰

Hardinge was not the only official whom Grey valued. In December 1906 he volunteered to Mallet some 'very flattering remarks' about Bertie, who, he said, impressed him with the

96. Hardinge to Bertie, 6 Oct.1906, ibid.

97. Bertie to Hardinge, 9 Oct.1906, ibid.

98. Hardinge to Bertie, 12 Oct.1906, ibid.

99. Bertie also explained to Hardinge that when he wrote 'My dear Hardinge' it meant and had always meant that such a letter was intended in the natural course of things to go into the office. Bertie to Hardinge, 15 Oct.1906 and 27 Oct.1906, ibid.

100. Edward VII to Campbell-Bannerman, 20 Nov.1906; Campbell-Bannerman to Knollys, 23 Nov.1906; Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 21 Nov.1906; Knollys to Hardinge, 24 Nov.1906; Minute by Edward VII, 24 Nov.1906; Hardinge MSS., 9. Bertie to Hardinge, 12 Dec. 1906; Hardinge to Bertie, 13 Dec.1906; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/181. Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, Old Diplomacy, (London, 1947), pp.130-131.

accuracy of his information and soundness of his judgements.¹⁰¹ It would be difficult, however, to assess the extent to which Bertie had actually influenced Grey during his first year at the Foreign Office. Other officials with whom Grey had closer contact held views on relations with France and Germany which were similar to those expressed by Bertie. Moreover, on no occasion either during the Algeciras conference or the discussions which followed it, does his advice appear to have been decisive in determining the course of British policy. But what Grey may have appreciated were Bertie's views on the political situation in France and the factors affecting French attitudes towards relations with Britain and Germany. Indeed, if Bertie had thus far contributed anything towards the strengthening of the entente, it was perhaps in the degree to which he had helped to extend Grey's understanding and appreciation of French policies and politics.

101. Mallet to Bertie, 14 Dec.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

Chapter III.

The maintenance of the status quo.

On 1 January 1907 Eyre Crowe submitted to the Foreign Office his memorandum on relations with France and Germany. In it he recommended that while the British government should not thwart the development of such German interests as did not conflict with those of Britain, they should resist any one-sided bargains and show the 'most unbending determination to uphold British rights and interests in every part of the world'.¹ Bertie could hardly have disagreed with such advice. Indeed some two days later he himself observed in a private letter to Grey:

We used to consider isolation as splendid but in view of the growing strength of Germany can we afford to do so? Does it not become necessary to take every precaution for the maintenance of the status quo and the preservation of the Balance of Power in the European System?²

This appeal was not ignored. In spite of his reluctance to extend Britain's international commitments, Grey was, during the spring of 1907, to become party to an exchange of notes with the French and Spanish governments for the maintenance of the status quo in those of their territories which bordered the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic. He had, however, no wish to appear to stand in the way of the fulfilment of all of Germany's political aspirations. Thus his adhesion in 1908 to an agreement on the status quo in the North sea responded less to the policy advocated by Bertie than to his desire to effect an improvement in Anglo-German relations. Moreover, the part played by Bertie in the negotiations which preceded the conclusion of these accords revealed the extent to which he

1. Memorandum by Eyre Crowe, 1 Jan. 1907, B.D., iii, 397-420.
2. Bertie to Grey, 3 Jan. 1907, B.D., vii, no. 8.

continued to distrust the aims and intentions of Britain's new-found friends.

Political changes in France had given both Lansdowne and Grey cause to have doubts about the future of the entente. The resignation of Sarrien on 20 October 1906, and the formation of a new government under Georges Clemenceau was therefore an event of some importance.³ As a result Bertie had the good fortune of being able to deal with a strong and relatively stable government in France during the greater part of the next three years. Moreover, although his relations with Clemenceau were marred by a number of disagreements on matters of foreign policy, they were a good deal closer than those which he enjoyed with any other French premier. This was in part a result of Clemenceau's anglophile views.⁴ It was also a measure of the dominating influence exercised by him over his colleagues within the council of ministers.⁵

Clemenceau chose for the Quai d'Orsay his friend Stephen Pichon. A former French minister at Peking, and more recently resident general at Tunis, he was according to George Grahame, the second secretary of the British embassy, favourably regarded by public opinion as an 'enlightened and laborious official

3. Already in June 1906 Bertie had informed Grey. 'It is noticeable how both inside and outside the House the personality of M.Clemenceau overshadows the rest of his colleagues especially the President of the Council'. He also reported that Clemenceau intended to oust Sarrien and replace Bourgeois with Pichon. Bertie to Grey, 25 June 1906, F.O.371/72, despt.no.255. Bertie to Grey, 18 Oct.1906; 19 Oct.1906; 21 Oct.1906; and 23 Oct.1906; F.O.371/71, tels.110, 112, 113 and 115. Bertie to Grey, 27 June 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. On the formation of Clemenceau's government see: Georges Bonnefous, Histoire Politique de la Troisième République (5 vols.Paris, 1956-1965), i, 34-39.

4. Clemenceau had spoken to Bertie in June 1906 'of the necessity in the interests of France and England and the peace of the world that the understanding between the two countries should be increased'. Bertie to Grey, 21 June 1906, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/184. P.Cambon to H.Cambon, 26 Oct.1906, Correspondence, ii,226.

5. Bertie to Mallet, 4 Nov.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

well-suited for his post by direct acquaintance with dipomacy and the administration of an important protectorate'.⁶ Yet during the next four years Bertie was to complain frequently of his indolence. His habit of disappearing to the country at frequent intervals delayed negotiations, and left to the permanent officials of the foreign ministry a degree of influence which Bertie disliked. Not that in his opinion Pichon was without an excuse for his misconduct. Bertie considered that Clemenceau's role in the determination of French foreign policy left Pichon with little room for personal initiatives. In a letter which he wrote to Hardinge in October 1908 Bertie observed: 'I suppose that he (Pichon) feels that as his function is to register Clemenceau's decisions he may as well draw his pay and enjoy himself out shooting'.⁷

According to Bertie Pichon did not kill much.⁸ He did, however, succeed in out-lasting Clemenceau in ministerial office by more than a year, and no-one else had such a continuous tenure at the Quai d'Orsay while Bertie was ambassador at Paris. In a period in which the absence of any direct challenge by Germany to the entente allowed older Anglo-French differences to reassert themselves, Pichon provided an element of continuity in French foreign policy. He also presided over the one formal extension of the geographical limits of the entente which took place in the decade before 1914.

The proposal made by Bertie in May 1905 for a British guarantee of Spain's territorial integrity in return for Spanish

6. 'Memorandum by Mr. Grahame respecting M. Clemenceau's Cabinet', enclosed in Bertie to Grey, 25 Oct. 1906, F.O. 371/71, despt. no. 404.

7. Bertie to Hardinge, 26 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/164. Bertie to Hardinge, 26 June and 5 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/165. Bertie to Grey, 8 Oct. 1909; 21 Oct. 1909; 30 Oct. 1909; Grey MSS., F.O. 800/51. Bertie to Grey, 3 Jan. 1910, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/52.

8. Bertie to Hardinge, 5 Oct. 1908, ibid.

promises on the security of Gibraltar had not been forgotten by his colleagues in London. A Foreign Office memorandum of 9 March 1906, which recounted the history of the negotiations on this subject, led Grey to suggest that it should be reconsidered after the Algeciras conference. Hardinge supported this course, which he thought would now have the advantage 'that French opposition is no longer to be anticipated'.⁹ But when finally the proposed agreement was taken up seriously by the Foreign Office, the circumstances were not dissimilar to those which had prompted Bertie to make the original recommendation to Lansdowne in 1905.

Soon after the conclusion of the Algeciras conference a German company with the support of the German embassy at Madrid approached the Spanish government with a request for the right to extend the Emden to Vigo telegraph cable to the Canaries.¹⁰ Both the British government, which assumed that Germany's real objective was to establish her own telegraph communication with South America and southern Africa, and the French government, which feared the further extension of the German cable to Morocco, regarded the project as a menace to their interests.¹¹ From the British point of view it would not only challenge the virtual monopoly of the Eastern Telegraph

9. F.O.Memorandum, 9 March 1906, with minutes by Grey and Hardinge, F.O.371/135.

10. General Report for Spain. 1906, F.O.371/336. The extension of the German cable from Vigo to Teneriffe was not without advantage for the Spanish authorities as the existing cable between Cadiz and Teneriffe was in a poor state of repair. It has been proposed that a second cable should be constructed, and the British controlled India Rubber and Gutta Persha Co. had bid for this tender. But if the scheme put forward by Messrs. Feltner Guillaume and Co. of Cologne for the extension of the cable from Vigo were accepted it would make the sinking of a second cable unnecessary. 'Royal Order and Report' enclosed in de Bunsen to Grey, 23 April 1906, F.O.371/135, despt.no.75. Cartwright to Grey, 24 May 1906, F.O.368/51, despt.no.78 (commercial). De Bunsen to Grey, 4 Aug. 1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/77.

11. Admiralty to F.O., 2 July 1906., Babington Smith (G.P.O.) to F.O., 2 July 1906; Grey to de Bunsen (undated, but probably 21 Dec. 1906), F.O.368/51, despt.no.44 (commercial). The German delegation at Algeciras had reserved for Germany the right to land a cable on the Moorish coast. J.Cambon to Bourgeois, 23 July 1906, D.D.F.2, x, no.166.

company of transatlantic communications with South America, but in the opinion of the Admiralty would have the undesirable effect of greatly strengthening the German telegraph communications for war purposes.¹²

At first the two governments endeavoured to oppose the granting of the German request by encouraging alternative schemes for improving cable communications between the Spanish mainland and the Canaries. It soon became apparent, however, that Spain had already gone far towards committing herself to Germany on this matter. During December the German embassy brought strong pressure to bear upon Spain's new foreign minister, Perez Caballero, in order to secure an early acceptance by him of the German scheme¹³. This presented Grey with the difficult task of trying to find a satisfactory basis on which to counter German diplomacy at Madrid. As he explained to Bertie in a telegram of 22 December he could not 'on the grounds of the Eastern Telegraph Monopoly alone urge Spain to refuse German concessions and incur consequent sacrifice'.¹⁴

One solution to Grey's problem, which was suggested by Hardinge, was that de Bunsen, Nicolson's successor at Madrid,

12. 'Memorandum respecting Cable Communications with the Canaries in relation to English, French, Spanish and German interests', G.Young, 5 Nov.1906; de Bunsen to Grey, 18 Dec. 1906; 21 Dec.1906; 28 Dec.1906; and 31 Dec.1906; F.O.368/51, despt.no.197 (commercial), and tels. 71,78 and 80 (commercial). 'Further Memorandum respecting Cable Communications with the Canaries in relation to English, French, Spanish and German interests', G.Young, 10 Jan.1907, F.O.368/127. For a recent examination of British strategic thinking with regard to cable communications see: P.M.Kennedy, 'Imperial cable communications and strategy, 1870-1914', English Historical Review, lxxxvi (1971), 728-752.

13. Ibid. J.Cambon to Bourgeois, 26 July 1906, D.D.F.2, x.no.173. Perez Caballero y Ferrer had formerly been Spain's minister at Brussels and her second delegate at the Algeciras conference. From 1910 until 1913 he was Spanish ambassador to France.

14. Grey to Bertie, 22 Dec.1906, F.O.368/51, tel.9 (commercial). In a letter to the British ambassador at Madrid Grey wrote that if Germany's object were an ocean cable communication and not Morocco, 'the opposition will give unnecessary provocation'. Grey to de Bunsen, 28 Dec.1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/77.

should warn Perez Caballero that once a German cable had been landed in the Canaries the next step would be its extension to Morocco.¹⁵ But Grey doubted if this was Germany's intention, and he was uncertain as to whether British interests warranted his continued opposition to the German project. In his telegram of 22 December he observed to Bertie that a German cable to South America and south Africa was not 'an object which we could permanently oppose on its own merits'.¹⁶ I should rather like to give a graceful concession to the Germans', he wrote to the prime minister on 27 December, but I do not like to do it in a matter which the French think will affect Morocco'. Good relations with France rather than British commercial or strategic interests explained Grey's policy in this matter. In his instructions to Bertie he observed that if the French government were sure that the main object of the concessions was to gain for Germany a communication to Morocco which could otherwise not be obtained, Britain would continue to support France's objections.¹⁷

In an aide memoire, which he left with Pichon on 24 December, Bertie faithfully recorded Grey's instructions.¹⁸

15. Minute by Hardinge on de Bunsen to Grey, 18 Dec.1906, F.O.368/51, despt.no.197 (commercial). Maurice William de Bunsen had previously been British minister at Lisbon. He succeeded Nicolson at Madrid in 1906, and remained there until 1913 when he was transferred to the embassy at Vienna.

16. Grey to Bertie, 22 Dec.1906, tel.9 (commercial), ibid.

17. Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 27 Dec.1906, Campbell-Bannerman MSS., (B.M.), Add.52514. On 28 December de Bunsen informed Grey that the Spanish foreign minister thought that the German government might be persuaded to give an undertaking not to connect either the Canaries or Vigo by cable with Morocco. Grey commented on this: 'If the French agree to this condition and Germany accept it, it may be the solution, but we must wait for the French view of it'. De Bunsen to Grey, 28 Dec.1906, and minute by Grey; de Bunsen to Grey, 28 Dec.1906, and minutes by Grey and A.Law; F.O.368/51, tels.82 and 83 (commercial).

18. Aide-memoire enclosed in Bertie to Grey, 24 Dec.1906; Bertie to Grey, 24 Dec.1906; F.O.368/51, despt.no.318 (Commercial), and tel.4 (commercial).

Nevertheless, he was far from pleased with the line adopted by Grey. German expansion, whether commercial or political, was for Bertie a sufficient threat to Britain to warrant her opposition to the cable concession. It was, he maintained, 'as much a British as a French interest to keep the Germans out of the Spanish Islands'. He claimed in a letter to Grey of 3 January 1907 that the Eastern Telegraph company and the investment of British as well as French capital in the proposed Spanish cable was 'quite sufficient to justify the opposition to the German cable'. It would, he warned Grey, not 'be advisable to let the French government think, or to give the French press ground for saying that in order to protect British interests, we are using French interests in Morocco and our obligations to support them as a lever'.¹⁹ This was a sound assessment of the likely reaction of the French to Grey's diplomacy. Bertie's aide memoire left Pichon under the impression that Grey meant France to take the initiative and responsibility in opposing the laying of the German cable.

In Pichon's estimation the German scheme was as much of a threat to Britain's interests as it was to those of France, and on 29 December he warned Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at Madrid, that in the existing political circumstances it was above all necessary that France should not appear 'comme soulevant une opposition contre une entreprise allemande dans un intérêt purement ou principalement français'. French policy, he thought, should be concerned simply with concerting and associating French efforts with England.²⁰ At Madrid, Jules Cambon explained to both de Bunsen and the Spanish

19. Bertie to Grey, 3 Jan. 1907, B.D., vii, no. 8.

20. Pichon to J. Cambon, 29 Dec. 1906, D.D.F.2, x, no. 380.

minister of state that the French were acting in accord 'mais derrière l'Angleterre'.²¹ Grey, however, continued to insist that if it were not for French interests in Morocco, he would not be prepared to offer further opposition to Germany's designs. Indeed, when in January 1907 the main French objections were met by the German company's renunciation of any intention of extending the cable to Morocco, all effective British opposition to the concession collapsed.²²

One effect of the German pressure upon the Spanish government with regard to the cable concession was that it heightened the concern felt by French officials over the possibility of the German government having aspirations upon Spain's possessions. The prospect of Germany obtaining a naval establishment in an area of great strategic value to France such as the Balearic islands led the Quai d'Orsay to raise the subject of an accord with Britain and Spain on the status quo in the Mediterranean and the Spanish islands in the Atlantic. Such an agreement was suggested by Paul Cambon to Bertie on 22 December.²³ Two days later Pichon spoke to Bertie about a recollection in the foreign ministry of some 'pourparlers or communications of some kind about Spanish Islands'. From this Bertie deduced that Jules Cambon, who was then in Paris, had in discussing the cable question with his brother, Paul, informed him of what Nicolson had said in 1905, and that this had been passed on to Pichon.²⁴

21. J.Cambon to Pichon, 2 Jan.1907, D.D.F.2, x, no.383.

22. Grey to Campbell-Bannerman 1 Jan. and 11 Jan.1907, Campbell-Bannerman MSS., (B.M) Add.52514. Grey to de Bunsen, 9 Jan.1907, private; Minutes by Mallet and Hardinge on India Rubber, Gutta Persha and Telegraph Works Co.Ltd. to F.O., 12 June 1907; F.O.368/127. De Bunsen to Grey, 25 Feb.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/77

23. Bertie to Grey, 25 Dec.1906, B.D., vii, no.7.

24. Ibid. Paul Cambon visited his brother Jules at Madrid in January 1906, and there had some conversation with Nicolson. It is possible that a guarantee arrangement with Spain might then have been discussed. In the following December Jules Cambon discussed the idea of a tripartite agreement with Pichon at Paris. Nicolson to Grey, 2 Jan.1906, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/337. J.Cambon to Pichon, 2 Jan.1907, D.D.F.2, x, no.384.

The proposal made by Paul Cambon to Bertie made no reference to Gibraltar, and this may help to explain his cautious response to it. According to Cambon, Bertie told him that while Grey would favour his proposal, he would have much opposition from his colleagues, who were 'paralysés par la crainte de responsabilites'.²⁵ Nevertheless, he was aware that the alarm expressed by Cambon and Pichon over German intentions might furnish Britain with the opportunity to secure from Spain an arrangement covering Gibraltar and the Spanish islands. On Christmas eve he wrote in a despatch to Grey:

The present moment might...be a favourable one for reviving with the Spanish Government the question of an undertaking by England to assist Spain in resisting aggression on Fernando Po, the Canaries and the Balearic Islands in return for an engagement by Spain that she will not in any way alienate by lease, concession or otherwise her rights in those Islands and will not erect works or place guns in the vicinity of Gibraltar which could threaten its safety or that of its anchorage.

The British government, Bertie contended in a subsequent letter, 'not only had the right but the duty to obtain security for Gibraltar', and in return they could assure Spain of what she had a right to, and whilst keeping out of her islands, 'keep out all others'. He explained to Grey that such an arrangement might not in ordinary circumstances have met with the approval of the French government, since it would deprive them of the opportunity of being able to instigate the Spaniards to erect works against Gibraltar. An arrangement with Spain on Gibraltar might, he thought, 'have been strongly but secretly opposed quite lately'.

Bertie also warned Grey about the danger of heeding the advice of 'experts'. Some, he observed, might think that a

25. P.Cambon to Pichon, 10 Jan.1907, D.D.F.2, x, no.390.

German occupation of the islands would not be harmful since this would necessitate a distribution of the German naval forces, which would be advantageous to Britain in the event of a war. But, he claimed, experts could often differ.²⁶

What Bertie may not have been aware of was that the whole subject of a Mediterranean agreement had already been submitted by Grey to the examination of the Committee of Imperial Defence. There the naval and military experts had not been so much concerned with the future of the Spanish islands as with demolishing the argument in favour of an Anglo-Spanish accord for safeguarding Gibraltar.²⁷ Indeed, the eventual pursuit by the British government of an agreement with Spain resulted less from Bertie's concern with Gibraltar and the fate of Spain's insular possessions than from Hardinge's fears about Morocco.

Lansdowne had in negotiating the agreement of 8 April 1904 sought to ensure that the northern littoral of Morocco should neither be fortified, nor placed in the hands of another great power. Thus the Anglo-French convention had provided for the non-fortification of the Moorish coast between the Sebou river and Mellila, and the establishment of a Spanish zone within those confines. Moreover, by their convention with France of 3 October 1904 the Spanish government had promised not to alienate any of the Moroccan territories designated to them. Yet, as Hardinge argued in a minute of 8 December 1906, this convention contained no provision that could prevent Spain from ceding any territory she might obtain in Morocco to France, or in the event of a Franco-Spanish war to any other power. To remedy this flaw he suggested that the negotiations which

26. Bertie to Grey, 24 Dec. and 25 Dec. 1906, B.D., vii, nos 6 and 7.

27. Minutes of the 94th meeting of the C.I.D., 20 Dec. 1906, CAB.38/12/59.

Lansdowne had proposed to de Villa Urutia should be commenced.²⁸ Grey recognized the advantage for Britain of such an arrangement with Spain, but he, like Bertie, also raised the issue of Gibraltar. Reluctant to multiply the country's treaty obligations, he minuted on 12 December that what would exercise a determining influence on his decision was 'the necessity for making further provision for the Security of Gibraltar and of the possibility of attaining this object by the means proposed'.²⁹

The threat to Britain's position at Gibraltar came, as Bertie saw it, from the possibility of the Spaniards constructing gun emplacements in the hills within range of the harbour. Nothing, however, was in the opinion of Grey's military advisers to be gained from a Spanish undertaking not to do this. As Grey explained to Bertie in a letter of 30 December, guns could without previous preparation be placed at any time by Spain in the 'blind country behind Gibraltar in such a way as to make the harbour useless'.³⁰ The only effective solution to the problem of Gibraltar's security was that put forward by Sir George Clarke, the secretary of the defence committee, which was to maintain good relations with Spain.³¹

28. Minute by Hardinge, 8 Dec.1906, B.D., vii, no.3. This argument was supported by the Admiralty. Captain Charles Ottley, the Director of Naval Intelligence pointed out in a memorandum, which was communicated to Grey, that it was doubtful if Britain would have to support a guarantee of Spain by force of arms. Memorandum by Ottley, 14 Dec.1906, enclosed in Tweedmouth to Grey, 15 Dec.1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/87.

29. Minute by Grey, 12 Dec.1906, C.I.D. paper, 44c, CAB 38/12/58. Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 12 Dec.1906; and Editorial Note, B.D., vii, no.4 and p.5.

30. Haldane to Grey, 15 Dec.1906, B.D., vii, no.5, Grey to Bertie, 30 Dec. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

31. Note by Sir George Clarke, 25 Dec.1906, CAB 38/12/62. De Bunsen pointed out that the Spaniards had already ^{informed} the British government in March 1899 that they had no intention of raising offensive works against Gibraltar. De Bunsen to Grey, 23 Feb.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/77.

Bertie reached much the same conclusion as Clarke.

Undeterred by Grey's letter of the 30th, he put aside the issue of gun emplacements, and raised the subject of the need for Spanish friendship. 'As Gibraltar appears to be at the mercy of Spanish mortars in Spanish ground invisible from Gibraltar', he asked Grey on 3 January, 'is it not of vital importance to make sacrifices to maintain the permanent friendship of Spain and therefore to guarantee her island property'? Doubtless influenced by the difficulties to which the German cable concession had given rise, he reminded Grey

Some people seem to think that we cannot prevent Germany from acquiring coaling stations and so becoming a Naval Power formidable to our commerce in time of war in other parts of the world than the North Sea, but where can she obtain coaling stations not British or French? We are bound to defend Portuguese possessions. There remains therefore only Spanish and Dutch property available: for the United States may be trusted to prevent the acquisition of anything in the West Indies.

Ever fearful of German duplicity, Bertie saw in a British guarantee of Spain a further means of restricting such acquisitive intentions as they might entertain. In the existing circumstances, he believed that Germany could always establish interests in Spanish possessions, provoke a quarrel between one of their nationals and the local authorities, and then take the opportunity to seize an island. If, however, Britain were bound to defend the Spanish islands, Bertie reasoned that the Germans would 'take good care not to push matters unless they desired war with us'. Whatever might have been Bertie's original concern for the security of Gibraltar, this issue was now relegated to a secondary role. On the subject of offering a guarantee treaty to Spain he wrote to Grey:

The safety of Gibraltar might be used as the ostensible reason for an arrangement with Spain though the maintenance of the integrity of Spain in the interests of the balance of power is really quite sufficient justification for a guarantee by us.³²

Bertie's objective was an agreement limited strictly to Britain and Spain. His efforts to obtain such an understanding were not, however, aided by the activities of the French at Madrid. Jules Cambon in an attempt to bring some precision to the various ideas, which had been expressed on the subject of a Spanish arrangement, produced his own project. This made no specific reference to Gibraltar, but provided for a tripartite agreement between Britain, France and Spain for the maintenance of the status quo in the western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic.³³

The news, which reached London on 8 January, that this scheme had been proposed to the Spanish king and his foreign minister caused some consternation amongst Grey and his officials. Jules Cambon's action appeared to be ill-timed rather than misconceived. De Bunsen who was bothered by the unstable state of Spanish politics, had delayed making any proposal until he felt sure that there was in office a government strong enough to receive it. He doubted if Jules Cambon would have much success, especially as he thought that the Spaniards would prefer a treaty with England alone, or, at least that the initiative should be English and not French.³⁴ 'The French', commented Grey, 'have spoilt the pitch by running over it in advance'. Eyre Crowe considered the French action to be 'not only maladroit in itself, but also very inconsiderate as regards this country', and Eric Barrington an assistant under-secretary, found it difficult to see 'where the "entente" comes

33. J.Cambon to Pichon, 2 Jan.1907, DDD.F.2, x, no.384. During 1903 Jules Cambon had been involved in negotiations with the object of associating Spain with the Franco-Russian alliance. He had then prepared with the Spanish government a draft accord which provided for the maintenance of the territorial status quo in the western Mediterranean. C.Andrew, pp.216-219.

34. De Bunsen to Grey, 8 Jan.1907; Grey to Bertie, 9 Jan.1907; B.D., vii, nos.9 and 10.

in if this sort of thing is done without consulting us'.

Neither Tyrrell nor Bertie were happy about the prospect of France joining in negotiations with Spain for an agreement.³⁵

In a letter to Bertie of 17 January Tyrrell wrote that 'it would be preferable that we should conclude the arrangement with Spain - including in it Gibraltar - and let the French join in later'. This was also Bertie's opinion. On the 19th he observed to Hardinge that he still thought that it had been a mistake on Lansdowne's part to take the French into his confidence in a matter which was purely Anglo-Spanish.

Tyrrell was doubtful about whether the Spanish government would accept in the present circumstances any agreement with Britain. He explained to Bertie that the Spaniards were in 'too great a funk of Germany to agree', and would decline on the grounds that public feeling would not allow them to include Gibraltar in an arrangement with England. Nevertheless, the steady pressure which Bertie exercised on Grey in favour of a guarantee to Spain was not in vain. According to Tyrrell there seemed to be a prospect of the cabinet agreeing to a British guarantee of the Spanish islands, and during the the first fortnight of January Grey showed an increasing awareness of the menace posed by Germany in Spain.³⁶

A letter which Grey sent to the prime minister on 11 January seemed to echo Bertie's earlier appeal. With reference to the German application for cable landing rights, he warned Campbell-Bannerman that Germany would 'continue to endeavour to get ascendancy over Spain'. Spain, he pointed out, was weak and afraid that France might squeeze her, and it was therefore to Britain that she looked with the 'greatest confidence in the honesty of our intentions'. If Germany gained a

35. Eric Barrington had been private secretary to Salisbury and to Lansdowne. He was an assistant under-secretary during 1906 and 1907. Minutes by Grey, Eyre Crowe and Barrington, on de Bunsen to Grey, 8 Jan. 1907, *ibid.*

36. Tyrrell to Bertie, 17 Jan. 1907, Bertie MSS., A.F.O.800/179.

landing place in her territory then, Grey contended, Britain should give Spain confidence in her future position by offering her an undertaking to protect her possessions against aggression in return for a guarantee which would increase the security of Gibraltar.³⁷ To such an approach the prime minister consented.³⁸

Meanwhile Bertie continued to demand a firm stand against what he regarded as Germany's ambitions. He wrote to Hardinge on 19 January that for many years Britain had been regarded as a state which could be squeezed ad libertum but Fashoda, he thought, had upset the idea that there was no limit on her giving way. What he feared was that the happy results of the stand made against the French would be thrown away if Britain gave way an inch to Germany. There was little danger in his opinion in opposing Germany, for, as he explained to Hardinge,

Her menaces are all bluff. We have only to be quite firm when our cases are good and she will fizzle out.³⁹

Hardinge was not convinced of the validity of Bertie's case. Where the issue of an arrangement with Spain was concerned, he was less interested in warning Germany against intrusion into the Spanish islands, than in the future of the Moroccan coast. Moreover, while he was not an advocate of a policy of concession towards Germany, he was critical of doing anything which might unnecessarily upset her. Indeed this was the basis of his opposition to a tripartite arrangement. The chief British objection to such an arrangement would, he argued in a memorandum of 25 March, be that it would have to be kept a secret. Otherwise, he thought, 'it would be seriously resented by Germany who would regard it as aimed at her'. It would, he contended, appear as a 'tightening of the net spread around German political activity', and might provoke

37. Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 11 Jan. 1907, Campbell-Bannerman MSS., (B.M.), Add. 52514.

38. Campbell-Bannerman to Grey, 14 Jan. 1907, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/100. P. Cambon to Pichon, 10 Jan. and 18 Jan. 1907; D.D.F. 2, x, nos. 390 & 394.

39. Bertie to Hardinge, 19 Jan. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/179.

her into 'hostile action of some kind'.⁴⁰ The Spanish government, however, showed a marked preference for an agreement such as Jules Cambon had proposed, which excluded any specific reference to Gibraltar.⁴¹

On 25 March Villa Urrutia, who was now Spain's ambassador in London, communicated to Grey an amended version of Cambon's proposed agreement. It provided that in the event of ^Sagression by a third party against the status quo, the three governments 'se reservent d'aviser eventuellement aux moyens d'en assurer la sauvegarde'.⁴² Yet Grey felt that while such a guarantee could not be given secretly, it was certain to meet with parliamentary opposition if Spain did not reciprocate it with a fresh promise on Gibraltar. He favoured, instead, a suggestion made by Hardinge that Britain and Spain should exchange notes. These, Hardinge proposed, should establish that the two governments were resolved to maintain the territorial status quo in the western Mediterranean and that part of the Atlantic which washed the shores of Africa, and provide for joint consultation in the event of it being menaced.⁴³

40. Progress towards an agreement was particularly slow during February because of the state of Spain's domestic politics and an impending election there. De Bunsen to Grey, 11 March and 12 March 1907, F.O.371/364, tels. 8 and 9. Memorandum by Hardinge, 25 March 1907, B.D., vii, no.19. Hardinge had already expressed in similar terms to Paul Cambon. P.Cambon to Pichon, 15 Feb.1907, D.D.F.2, x, no.412.
41. De Bunsen to Grey, 23 Feb.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/77. De Bunsen to Grey, 16 March 1907, F.O.371/364, despt.no.58. Grey to de Bunsen, 7 Feb. 1907; Grey to Bertie, 14 Feb.1907; B.D., vii, nos.11 and 14.

42. M.Jules Cambon's Draft Note of February 14 1907, as amended by Senor de Villa Urrutia; Grey to de Bunsen, 25 March 1907, B.D., vii, nos.17 and 18. Minute by Eyre Crowe on de Bunsen to Grey, 18 April 1907, F.O.371/364, tel.18.

43. Minute by Hardinge, 28 March 1907; Basis of Notes to be exchanged between the British and Spanish Governments, 28 March 1907; Grey to Bertie, 5 April 1907; B.D., vii, nos.20, 21 and 23.

Both the French and Spanish governments were hesitant about the substitution of an exchange of notes for a tripartite treaty. Nevertheless, during the king's visit to Cartagena in April Hardinge succeeded in overcoming Spanish objections.⁴⁴ Bertie was also successful at Paris. On 6 April he persuaded Clemenceau to agree to Grey's proposal that France should supplement her existing agreement with Spain with a note similar to that which Hardinge had suggested.⁴⁵ French officials were, however, reluctant to abandon their treaty project, and Bertie rightly suspected the Quai d'Orsay of trying to persuade the Spaniards to insist on such an arrangement.⁴⁶

On 22 April Paul Cambon proposed to Grey that the British and French governments should give each other written pledges to concert in consequence of the same eventuality as was foreseen in the projected Spanish notes. As Hardinge pointed out, this would have involved Britain in a much more direct and emphatic obligation than that which she was to accept towards Spain. It presented in his estimation the disadvantages of a tripartite agreement, and the 'impression of an unfriendly

44. Bertie to Grey, 27 April 1907, F.O.371/364, despt.no.216. Hardinge to Grey, 9 April 1907; Bertie to Grey, 16 April and 17 April 1907; B.D., vii, nos.25, 26, 29 and 30. Hardinge to Edward VII, 30 March and 24 April 1907, Hardinge MSS., 9. Hardinge to Bertie, 10 April 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

45. Bertie to Grey, 7 April and 11 April 1907, B.D. vii, nos. 24 and 28.

46. Jules Cambon, who had in the meantime left Madrid to become French ambassador at Berlin, pressed the Quai d'Orsay to work for a single instrument rather than separate notes. J.Cambon to Louis, 13 April 1907; J.Cambon to Pichon, 28 April 1907; D.D.F.2, x, nos.458 and 481. While he was at Carthagena Hardinge was told by the Spanish foreign minister that Jules Cambon had insisted that if Spain made a separate agreement with England, and one not of a tripartite form, she 'would have to begin again from the beginning with France, as had been the case with England in regard to our negotiations about Abyssinia'. Hardinge to Grey, 10 April 1907, Hardinge MSS., 10. Bertie to Grey, 21 April 1907; Bertie to Grey, 1 May 1907, F.O.371/364, despt. nos.201 and 226. Bertie to Grey, 18 April 1907; Grey to Bertie, 19 April 1907; B.D., vii, nos.31 and 32.

coalition'.⁴⁷ Bertie, however, was more concerned with the possibility of a further delay allowing the Germans an opportunity to interfere in the negotiations, than with the prospect of causing offence at Berlin. Moreover, he saw some advantage in Britain and France promising each other not to divest themselves of any of their possessions in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. An engagement of that kind would, he believed, be useful to Britain in the event of a defeat by Germany of France in a conflict in which Britain was not engaged. It would, he observed to Grey, 'give us a locus standi to object to the transfer to Germany of any of the French possessions covered by the engagement between France and England'.⁴⁸

Hardinge could see no such advantage. In the event of a French defeat, he estimated that Britain might only prevent cessions to Germany by recourse to arms. Grey agreed, but a locus standi, he thought, would make it easier for the government to put their case for war before the public, and that, he commented, 'is worth something'.⁴⁹ Yet for the present he did not believe that the government could go beyond an exchange of notes with Spain, and finally on 16 May identical notes on a basis similar to that suggested by Hardinge were exchanged by the British and French governments with that of Spain.⁵⁰

47. Note by Grey, 22 April 1907; M.Cambon's projet of a Note and minute by Hardinge; F.O.371/364. Hardinge to Bertie, 30 April 1907. Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. The French Government were also anxious that their arrangements with Spain and Britain should not appear to others as a convention à trois, and Paul Cambon wanted the Anglo-French exchange of notes to be secret. Grey, however, was unhappy about the prospect of misleading parliament, and for this reason preferred the idea of a verbal assurance. Grey to Bertie, 25 April 1907. F.O.371/364, despt.no.249.

48. Bertie to Grey, 18 April 1907, B.D.,vii, no.31. Bertie to Grey, 27 April 1907, F.O.371/364, despt.no.217.

49. Minutes by Hardinge and Grey, on Bertie to Grey, 18 April 1907, /Ibid.

50. Grey to Bertie, 26 April 1907, F.O.371/364, despt.no.252. Grey to Villa Urrutia, 16 May 1907; Villa Urrutia to Grey 16 May 1907; Notes exchanged between Pichon and Leon y Castillo, 16 May 1907; Grey to Bertie, 17 May 1907; B.D.,vii, nos.39,40,41 and 46.

On the same day Grey declared to Paul Cambon that if the British and Spanish governments had to communicate with each other in the circumstances alluded to in the notes,

...both would now be able to communicate with the French Government, also, knowing that France takes the same view, and is as firmly resolved to preserve intact her rights over her insular and maritime possessions in the regions referred to, as are Great Britain and Spain to preserve those their respective countries.⁵¹

In terms which were not dissimilar Paul Cambon replied that in the circumstances foreseen in the notes the French government would be ready to 'se concerter avec le Gouvernement Britannique en même temps qu'avec le Gouvernement Espagnole'.⁵² The significance of these exchanges was enhanced when on 8 June Grey assured Cambon that he regarded 'the spirit of the Agreement of 1904 as applying to the provisions of these Notes, and the same support would be forthcoming as we had given in connection with the 1904 agreement'.⁵³ This was confirmed by Bertie, who on 22 June told Pichon that in the event of German pressure upon France in consequence of the notes exchanged with Spain, the British government would give France the same support as they had given her at the Algeiras conference.⁵⁴ The effect was to extend the geographic limits of British diplomatic support for France from Morocco to the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic.

As with the Abyssinian negotiations of the previous year, Bertie was uncompromising in his attitude towards the communication of the notes to the German government. Desirous of forestalling any misunderstanding which might arise out of incomplete and inaccurate reports getting about, both Eyre Crowe

51. Declaration made by Grey to Paul Cambon, 16 May 1907, B.D., vii, no.42.

52. Declaration made by Paul Cambon to Grey, 16 May 1907, BD., vii, no.43.

53. Grey to Bertie, 8 June 1907, B.D., vii, no.50. P.Cambon to Pichon, 8 June 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no.17. Grey to Bertie, 14 June 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

54. Bertie to Grey, 22 June 1907, F.O.371/364, despt.no.320, Pichon to P.Cambon, 22 June 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no.44.

and Eric Barrington had advised Grey in April to give notice to the German government of Britain's intentions.⁵⁵ To such action Bertie was resolutely opposed. He wrote to Hardinge on 10 May that if such a communication were made to the German government, they would probably say that it did not concern them.⁵⁶ His views were shared by Hardinge, who warned Paul Cambon that for Britain and France to inform Germany would be to seek an absolution, and to give her reason to suspect their intentions. Indeed, only after it had become apparent that the French press had learnt of the notes was knowledge of them communicated to Germany and the other powers.⁵⁷

The arrangements with Spain were not, however, in Bertie's view intended as a means of isolating Germany. When on 1 November Barrère, his former colleague at Rome, suggested to him that England should make an agreement with Italy similar to that which she had made with Spain, and thereby bring Italy into the guarantee of the Mediterranean status quo, Bertie rejected the idea as an 'unnecessary offence to Germany'.

55. Minutes by Eyre Crowe and Barrington on Bertie to Grey, 17 April 1907, B.D.vii, no.30. When Pichon learned that the press had got wind of the arrangement he thought that the first two powers which France should inform were Russia and Italy. Bertie to Grey, 30 May 1907, F.O.371/364, tel.20.

56. Bertie to Hardinge, 10 May 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

57. P.Cambon to Pichon, 17 May 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no.2. Eyre Crowe appears to have changed his mind with regard to the communication of the notes. It was not clear to the officials of the Foreign Office that there had in fact been a leakage to the French press, and neither Eyre Crowe nor Grey was enthusiastic about the French suggestion that the other powers should be informed. It was the British government, however, which demanded that the notes also be published. Grey to de Bunsen, 28 May 1907, B.D., vii, no.45. Bertie to Grey, 30 May 1907, and minute by Eyre Crowe; Grey to Bertie, 31 May 1907, de Bunsen to Grey, 1 June 1907; Bertie to Grey, 1 June 1907; Lascelles to Grey, 15 June 1907; F.O.371/364 tels. 20, 33, 25, 21 and 15. Pichon to P.Cambon, D.D.F.2, xi, no.16.

Spain was a weak power which might as a result of German diplomatic pressure have been coaxed into making concessions. But there was, Bertie believed, no likelihood of Italy making any such concessions to German interests at Britain's expense. While Spain had possessions which others might wish to obtain, Bertie observed to Barrere:

With Italy the case was different. She had none that she could possibly be persuaded to dispose of and if she required to be protected from the rapacity of others we could always defend her without an agreement.⁵⁸

What Bertie had encouraged Grey to seek was a limited local arrangement, which might help to secure British interests in an area where he believed them to be menaced. If the notes appeared to restrict Germany, that was because she and her ambitions were regarded by Bertie and his colleagues as the principal threat to Britain's security.

The understanding between Britain and France was further complemented in August 1907 by the signing of the Anglo-Russian convention on Persia and central Asia.⁵⁹ Bertie had favoured the conclusion of such an arrangement, but he did not share with Hardinge and Nicolson, his successor at St.Petersburg, their confidence in Russian friendship and goodwill. He particularly distrusted the aims and intentions of Alexander Izvolsky, the Russian foreign minister, who, in the autumn of 1910, was to join him in Paris as Russian ambassador to France.⁶⁰

58. Bertie to Grey, 1 Nov.1907, and minute by Grey, B.D., viii, no.20. Grey agreed with Bertie's advice. He did not think that Italy would agree to such an arrangement. Tittoni, the Italian foreign minister, he thought, would 'make capital out of the refusal, and we should incur all the odium of having offended Germany, while we should secure no advantage for ourselves'. Grey to Bertie, 6 Nov.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/173. One reason for Jules Cambon's opposition to anything but a tripartite agreement between Britain, France and Spain had been that he thought Italy would find it easier to accede to a single instrument. J.Cambon to Pichon, 1 March 1907, D.D.F.2, x, no.423.

59. Monger, pp.281-295.

60. Alexander Petrovitch Izvolsky was Russian foreign minister from 1906 until 1910. He was Russia's ambassador at Paris from 1910 until 1917.

Bertie's opinion of Izvolsky was coloured by his first brief encounter with him on the occasion of his visit to Paris in October 1906. This visit formed part of a private journey which Izvolsky intended to conclude with a stay at Berlin.⁶¹ He did not, despite the negotiations then proceeding at London, propose to visit England, but instead requested Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador there, to meet him in Paris.⁶² When, however, King Edward learned of Izvolsky's presence in France, he suggested to Poklewsky, the Russian chargé d'affaires, that the foreign minister should cross the Channel. Hardinge was at first enthusiastic about this proposal, but, having heard Poklewsky's objections about the ill-effect that it might have upon the susceptibilities of other powers, he persuaded Grey of the unwisdom of any official invitation.⁶³ Indeed, both Grey and rest of the government seem to have become rapidly aware of the dangers involved in appearing to 'hustle' Izvolsky over the Anglo-Russian negotiations.⁶⁴

It was unfortunate that Bertie was not informed of these proceedings in London for on 22 October Izvolsky, despite a warning to him from Benckendorff that Bertie was not 'un bon intermédiaire', presented himself at the British embassy in order to explain his reasons for declining the king's invitation.⁶⁵ He informed Bertie that he could not go to London as the press would make out that the negotiations had gone further than they had, and he might have to discuss matters for which he was not yet prepared. He observed to Bertie that at Berlin he wanted

61. Bertie to Grey, 21 Oct. 1906, F.O.371/74, despt.no.394.

H. Izvolsky, Au Service de la Russie (Paris, 1937), pp.365-367.

62. Ibid. Alexander, Count Benckendorff was Russian Ambassador at London from 1903 until 1917.

63. Hardinge to Nicolson, 21 Oct. 1906, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/335. Izvolsky, pp.379-381.

64. Izvolsky, p.382.

65. Izvolsky, pp.374-376.

to ascertain what interests Germany had in Persia so as to avoid a repetition of the sort of crisis that France had had to face in Morocco.⁶⁶

Both Grey and Hardinge accepted Izvolsky's explanations and assurances in an accommodating spirit.⁶⁷ The same could not, however, be said of Bertie. He suspected, like Clemenceau, that in deciding not to go to London, Izvolsky was changing his plans in deference to Berlin. Moreover, he was annoyed at the prospect of Izvolsky consulting the Germans on what he considered to be an Anglo-Russian affair. As Germany had already volunteered the statement that her interests in Persia were 'purely commercial', Bertie considered that it would be better simply to accept that, and act accordingly. In this sense his fears were hardly allayed by a remark made to him by Benckendorff that Russia 'was under great obligations to Germany, and was bound to conciliate her as much as possible'. The impression that he was left with was that Russia would not go far without German permission, and in a letter to Mallet of 23 October he predicted that Izvolsky would 'make use of German pretensions in negotiating with us and will use us in coming to terms with Germany'. Russia, he reasoned, might become 'easy in regard to the Baghdad Railway', and press Britain to give way to German wishes in the Persian gulf and Koweit on condition that Germany would not make any claims in the Russian sphere of Persia.⁶⁸

66. Izvolsky spoke in similar terms to Clemenceau and Pichon. He also explained in a letter to Poklewsky that at Berlin he did not intend to touch upon either the Anglo-Russian discussions, or the British government's proposals. He wanted to find out what interested Germany in these matters. Russia, he insisted, must preserve intact her old and traditional friendship with Germany. Izvolsky, pp.382-385. Bertie to Grey, 22 Oct. and 26 Oct; B.D., iv, nos.230 and 233. Bertie to Grey, 26 Oct.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

67. Izvolsky, pp.385-387.

68. Bertie to Grey, 22 Oct. and 25 Oct.1906; B.D., iv, nos.231 and 232. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/49. Bertie was probably confirmed in his suspicions by Barrère, the French ambassador at Rome, who told him that 'he knew for certain that Monsier Izvolsky had been dissuaded from going to England by the German Government'. Bertie to Grey, 1 Nov.1907, B.D., viii, no.109.

Even after Grey had informed him in a letter of 8 November that it was the 'King's verbal invitation and not any change in his own plans which was the origin of M. Izvolsky's explanation for not coming', Bertie maintained the view that he had originally intended to go to London. Izvolsky's face reminded Bertie of Ignatiev, the former Russian ambassador at Constantinople, who, he explained to Grey, was known as the 'grandfather of liars. Absit omen'.⁶⁹

Bertie no doubt felt confirmed in his views on Izvolsky by the part played by Russia during the following year in the affairs of the Baltic. There the separation of Norway from Sweden in 1905 had called into question both the Anglo-French guarantee of the two kingdoms, which had been given fifty years before, and the future of that sea and its approaches.⁷⁰ The danger for Britain was that the Scandinavian states might through weakness and isolation gravitate towards their stronger neighbours. In these circumstances first Lansdowne and then Grey sought to promote a rapprochement between Norway and Sweden, and to obtain an international guarantee of their future status.⁷¹ Yet there was in this procedure a problem for if the neutrality of Scandinavia were guaranteed, and Denmark were included within the scope of the arrangement, belligerent warships might be denied entrance to the Baltic.⁷² Paul Cambon warned Pichon

69. Grey to Bertie, 8 Nov. 1906, B.D., iv, no. 237. Bertie to Grey, 10 Nov. 1906, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/49. Mallet also doubted Izvolsky's honesty of purpose. He was, he observed to Bertie, 'a slippery customer', Mallet to Bertie, 8 Nov. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/177.

70. The interests of the great powers in Scandinavia and the problems raised by the separation of Norway from Sweden are examined in Folke Lindberg, Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1905-1908, (Stockholm, 1958), pp. 3-48.

71. D.W. Sweet, 'The Baltic in British Diplomacy before the First World War', Historical Journal, xiii (1970), 457-460.

72. Tweedmouth warned Grey in December 1907: 'It would be very detrimental to our interests if entrance to the Baltic should be impaired or made more difficult than at present for nations who do not own coast-line on that sea'. Tweedmouth to Grey, 30 Dec. 1907, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/87.

on 23 November 1906 that he believed the German objective to be an agreement on this basis, which, he estimated, would work solely to the advantage of Germany and Russia.⁷³

Similar views were expressed to Bertie by both Pichon and the Norwegian minister at Paris.⁷⁴

Bertie was clearly impressed by these contentions. In the closure of the Baltic he saw a possible basis for a Russo-German accord. This would, he suggested to Pichon, be a 'tempting bait' to Russia for her acquiescence in the neutralization of Norway. On 2 December he warned Pichon:

The interdiction of the passage of warships might not be important to France so long as she remained the ally of Russia, but in the far future matters might be changed, and it might be injurious to French interests, as well as those of England, that their warships should not have access to the Baltic.

Bertie felt, however, that the French government had no wish to take any prominent part in discussions with Germany, and that they hoped that the British government in defending their interests would protect also those of France.⁷⁵

One object of British diplomacy was to avoid the conclusion of any agreement such as might, in the event of an Anglo-German war, leave Germany the opportunity to occupy Jutland, but oblige France and Russia to oppose the seizure of a Norwegian

73. P.Cambon to Pichon, 23 Nov.1906, D.D.F.2, x, no.304.

74. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec.1906; 20 Dec.1906; 23 Dec.1906; F.O.371/98, despt. nos.482, 531 and 536. Nevertheless, Hardinge insisted to Cambon that if the straits were neutralized this would not dose them to foreign warships. He further contended in a memorandum of 18 February 1907 that the recognition of Denmark's permanent neutrality would merely perpetuate the temporary neutrality which non-belligerents were accustomed to proclaim at the outbreak of a war. P.Cambon to Pichon, 28 Nov.1906, D.D.F.2, x, no.318. Memorandum by Hardinge, 18 Feb. 1907, B.D., viii, no.91.

75. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec.1906, despt.ibid.

port by Britain.⁷⁶ After Sweden's rejection in November 1906 of any great power guarantee of her status, an accord on Norway seemed unlikely to materialize. The Norwegians sought, and the Russian and German governments opposed, a guarantee which would leave Norway free to make defensive arrangements with her Scandinavian neighbours.⁷⁷ But in June 1907 the British government were surprised and embarrassed when after protracted negotiations Norway gave way and accepted a Russian draft project, which contained an unconditional guarantee of her neutrality.⁷⁸ Moreover, on 25 June Izvolsky proposed that the convention of 1856, which provided for the non-fortification of the Aaland islands, should be abrogated.⁷⁹

Bertie's reaction to the Russian initiative was distinctly unfavourable. Acting without instructions and quite unofficially, he proceeded to lecture Clemenceau on 9 July about the iniquities of Russian policy. It was a 'driious-coincidence', he observed, that Russia should introduce her demand for the abrogation of the Aaland islands convention, 'which would reduce Sweden to the position of a Russian Grand Duchy', at the same time as she

76. On 21 February 1907 Ottley put it to the defence committee that an international guarantee which covered Denmark was more likely to work to Britain's advantage than to that of Germany. But he pointed out that if Norway's neutrality were guaranteed, but Denmark's were not, German forces would in a war be able to occupy Denmark without automatically bringing other powers into the conflict against her. While if Britain responded by seizing a Norwegian port, Russia and France would be obliged to fight against her. Minutes of the 95th meeting of the C.I.D., 21 Feb. 1907, CAB.38/13/10. Delavaud, the French minister at Copenhagen suspected that the object of British diplomacy was to prevent the conclusion of any arrangement which could produce the situation that Ottley feared. He observed to Pichon 'que l'Angleterre, même quand elle parle de la Suède, pense au Danemark', Delavaud to Pichon, 2 July 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no.61. Sweet, pp.461-463.

77. Both Russia and Germany insisted that Norway should accept a position of absolute rather than conditional neutrality. Grey hoped that the clash of interest between Norway and Russia and Germany would eventually lead to the disappearance of any neutrality formula. Sweet, pp.463-464.

78. Ibid. Nicolson to Grey, 19 June 1907, B.D., viii, no.94.

79. Memorandum communicated by the Russian ambassador, 25 June 1907, B.D., viii, no.9.

proposed a treaty which would deprive Norway of the opportunity to make arrangements with Sweden for their common defence, and that the Norwegians should now accept it. Evidently troubled by the prospect of the Baltic being closed to British warships, he tried to win French support for the British case. He put it to Clemenceau 'that he personally not having Russian predilections could not be in favour of making the Baltic a Russo-German lake'. Given the present intimacy between the Russian and German emperors, Bertie argued, that Russia might not continue to be France's ally, and that there might be a revival of the close understanding that had once existed between the three eastern empires. If in such circumstances there were an Anglo-German war, and Norwegian neutrality had been guaranteed by the powers, Bertie explained that Britain would not be able to take a Norwegian port to watch the Baltic approaches without raising a question in which France would be called upon to oppose England. 'France', he said, 'would be in the dilemma of having to support Germany against England or to disregard her guarantee'.

Apart from an undertaking to consult Pichon, Bertie obtained little from Clemenceau. Although he did not rule out the possibility of a change in Russia's attitude towards France, he thought it unlikely, and in the meantime he was clearly embarrassed by Russian policy in the Baltic.⁸⁰ He told Bertie on 14 July that France would find it very difficult to oppose Russia in Scandinavian affairs.⁸¹

80. Bertie to Grey, 9 July 1907, B.D., viii, no.106. Nevertheless, in raising the matter of the Aaland islands the Russians did provide the Foreign Office with the opportunity to reject the Russian draft treaty with regard to Norway and to propose an international conference on the Baltic. Hardinge to Bertie, 18 July 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Delavand to Pichon, 2 July 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no.61.

81. On 10 July Pichon told Bertie with regard to the Russian proposals on the Aaland islands that the French 'could not well oppose the will of the Russian government, and they knew it was not acceptable to England'. Possibly with a view to persuading Pichon to take the matter up with the Russians, Bertie pointed out that the Russian demand 'might hinder Agreements between Russia and England concerning Central Asia and Persia 'which the French wanted to see concluded. Bertie to Grey, 10 July 1907, F.O.371/338. despt.no.349. Bertie to Grey, 14 July, F.O.371/295. despt.295.

The speed with which the German government had shown itself ready to sign the proposed Norwegian treaty led Bertie to suppose that Russia had concluded a preliminary agreement with Germany on the Baltic.⁸² The same conclusion was drawn by Bompard, France's ambassador at St. Petersburg. In a despatch of 15 June he warned Pichon that he had gathered from what Izvolsky had recently said that Germany was considering the possibility of opposing the Mediterranean agreements with a status quo arrangement in the Baltic.⁸³ He also passed on to Nicolson information which he possessed with regard to an accord between Russia, Germany, and possibly Sweden.⁸⁴

The German and Russian governments had in fact been working together on the subject of the Norwegian treaty, and Izvolsky had endeavoured to win German support for the ending of the Aaland islands 'servitude', and the exclusion of the British Fleet from the Baltic. At a meeting of the German and Russian emperors at Swinemünde in August 1907 he tried to secure Schoen's approval for a protocol according to which Germany and Russia would agree not to recognise as interested parties non-riverain states of the Baltic. The Germans, however, were reluctant to agree to an arrangement which was so overtly directed against England, and would not commit themselves to anything more than a guarantee of the status quo.⁸⁵ Finally on 29 October they concluded with Russia a secret accord which stated the desire of both governments to maintain the status quo of the Baltic, and their readiness to sign similar accords with Denmark and Sweden. The Germans also

82. Bertie to Grey, 9 July 1907, op.cit.

83. Bompard to Pichon, 15 June 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no.30. Louis Maurice Bompard was France's ambassador at St. Petersburg from 1902 until 1907. He was subsequently ambassador at Constantinople.

84. Nicolson to Grey, 18 June 1907, F.O.371/338, despt.no.328.

Nicolson to Hardinge, 19 June 1907, Hardinge MSS., 10.

85. Lindberg, pp.94-104. According to Bompard it had not been necessary for Izvolsky to go to Swinemünde with the emperor, but he had thought it better not to leave Nicholas II to fall prey to the intrigues of William II. Bompard to Pichon, 10 Aug.1907, Pichon MSS., (B.I.F.), 4395.

declared that they would not regard the abrogation of the Aaland islands convention in Russia's favour as contrary to these provisions.⁸⁶ Henceforth both Germany and Russia began to exert pressure on Sweden in order to draw her into a status quo arrangement.⁸⁷

Reports about what had happened at Swinemünde meanwhile generated speculation in London and Paris about the state of Russia's relations with Germany. Bertie was from the start both more suspicious than his colleagues in London about Izvolsky's intentions, and less inclined than Pichon to attribute the initiative for any arrangement between Russia and Germany to the latter power.⁸⁸ From conversations which he had with Pichon and Barrère on 30 October and 1 November he drew the conclusion that the French had good reason to believe that Russia had come to an understanding with Germany. He thought that the Russians might find advantage in an agreement on Poland, and an undertaking by Germany to assist them against naval attack by the closure of the Baltic.⁸⁹ Yet Hardinge thought it incredible that Russia should, when her fleet was practically non-existent, conclude an agreement by which in the event of a Franco-German

86. Lindberg, pp.156-157, Editorial Note, B.D. viii, 132.

87. Lindberg, pp.157-166.

88. On 6 September the Japanese chargé d'affaires at St.Petersburg told Nicolson that he had been informed that the Russian and German emperors had come to a mutual understanding to assist each other in defending their interests in the Baltic. Nicolson explained to Grey that the Japanese legation was credited with being very well informed. However, he told the Japanese chargé d'affaires that he doubted if such an agreement had been concluded. Nicolson to Grey, 7 Sept.1907, B.D., viii, no.107. Minute by Spicer on Bertie to Grey, 31 Oct.1907, F.O.371/338, despt.no.525. Bompard to Pichon, 16 Nov.1907, Pichon MSS., (B.I.F.).4395. Lindberg, pp.166-169. Sweet, pp.467-468.

89. Bertie suggested to Barrère that Germany might in order to obtain the assistance of Sweden in closing the Baltic give her a secret guarantee against attack by Russia. 'This', he observed, 'would be a reinsurance after the manner of Bismarck'. Bertie to Grey, 31 Oct. and 1 Nov.1907; B.D., viii, nos.108 and 109.

war she would be bound to keep the French fleet out of the Baltic.⁹⁰ To Paul Cambon he insisted that Britain had always contemplated the closure of the Baltic during a war with Germany, and 'fortunately the risk of a war with Russia had been indefinitely removed'. Besides, he considered that any attempt to turn the Baltic into a closed sea might be combatted by Anglo-French recalcitrance on the Aaland islands.⁹¹

Bertie was sceptical about relying upon French support in this matter. He pointed out to Grey that the French government, in view of their relations with Germany, felt it difficult to oppose Russian wishes. 'In questions such as that of the Baltic', he observed, 'where French and British interests are identical but not in accordance either with those of Russia or of Germany, the French Government are inclined to leave the defence of them to His Majesty's Government'.⁹² Already on 1 November he had admonished Barrère on this point, and when, after the signing of an international guarantee treaty on Norway's integrity, the French began to show belated concern about Sweden's security, Bertie spared few words in reminding Pichon that Britain could not be expected to defend the interests of France without her support.⁹³

Meanwhile despite a report from Nicolson of 11 November that Germany and Russia had arrived at, or were about to arrive at, an understanding on the Baltic, Hardinge remained convinced

90. 'I very much doubt', Hardinge concluded, 'if there is any real foundation for the rumoured treaty'. Minute by Hardinge on Bertie to Grey, 1 Nov. 1907, F.O. 371/338, despt. no. 526. On 6 November Grey wrote to Bertie, 'I cannot believe that Russia is really making an agreement with Germany about the Baltic behind the back of France'. Grey to Bertie, 6 Nov. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/173.

91. P. Cambon to Pichon, 8 Nov. 1907, D.D.F. 2, xi, no. 196. Hardinge to Nicolson, 12 Nov. 1907. B.D., vii, no. 111.

92. Bertie to Grey, 13 Nov. 1907, F.O. 371/338, despt. no. 544.

93. Bertie to Grey, 1 Nov. 1907, B.D., viii, no. 109. Bertie to Grey, 7 Nov. 1907, F.O. 371/296, despt. no. 534. Sweet, pp. 466-467.

that the Russians had simply engaged in discussions with the Germans on that sea and the future of the Aaland islands.⁹⁴ Bertie, however, felt that the French possessed 'reliable information' about a Russo-German understanding.⁹⁵ Indeed, on 28 November he informed Grey that he knew for certain that such an arrangement had been concluded. He had no idea as to what its provisions were, or whether Sweden was a party to it. Nor for that matter did he tell Grey from whence he had received this information, save to say that it had not come from the Quai d'Orsay, and that therefore Grey should not tell Paul Cambon about it.⁹⁶

Matters were further complicated by the German government. They, having learned that their negotiations had become known in London and Paris, tried to forestall a British intervention

94. Once more Nicolson's information came from Bompard. The impression left on Nicolson by Izvolsky was 'that something was in the wind'. Nicolson to Hardinge, 21 Nov.1907. Harding MSS., 10. After 'pumping' Poklewski on the subject of the Baltic, Hardinge concluded that what was under discussion was an arrangement on the Baltic status quo and an agreement with Sweden on the Aaland islands. Hardinge to Grey, 23 Nov.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/92. Nicolson to Grey, 11 Nov.1907, F.O.371/338, tel.235. Minute by Hardinge on Bertie to Grey, 22 Nov.1907, F.O.371/338, despt.no.554.

95. Hardinge doubted this. He minuted: 'I do not think the French Government have any definite information'. All he thought they knew was that Schoen, the German foreign minister, and Izvolsky had when they were colleagues at Copenhagen elaborated a scheme for the closure of the Baltic, and that Izvolsky had recently made remarks about the Mediterranean agreements which were taken to imply that Russia was assuming her liberty of action in her relations with Germany. Bertie to Grey, 13 Nov.1907, and minute by Grey, F.O.371/338, despt.no.544. Bompard seems to have had no very definite information about what was contained in the Russo-German agreement. He wrote to Pichon on 30 November: 'Mon collègue anglais fait feu des quatre pieds pour apprendre quelque chose de l'arrangement baltique. Les seuls, au dehors des intéressés, qui en aient en vent ici sont les japonais'. Bompard to Pichon, 30 Nov.1907, Pichon MSS., (B.I.F.)4395.

96. Bertie to Grey, 28 Nov.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. De Salis, the British chargé d'affaires at Berlin also reported to Hardinge that Jules Cambon had informed him 'with more certainty than ever that he was sure that an arrangement had been arrived at'. De Salis to Hardinge, 6 Dec.1907, Hardinge MSS., 10. But Grey, though he was inquisitive about the terms of the Baltic agreement, was aware that Britain was 'powerless to interfere'. Grey to Bertie, 29 Nov.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

by proposing an international agreement on the status quo in the North sea.⁹⁷ Moreover, the explanations which they and the Russians offered with regard to their discussions with Sweden did little to clarify the issue for the western powers. Izvolsky assured Nicolson that all that had been contemplated was an exchange of notes guaranteeing the status quo in the Baltic, and that the closure or neutralization of the Baltic had not been mentioned in recent discussions. No mention was made by either the German or Russian governments of what had been settled on 29 October.⁹⁸

In London Grey and his officials were less worried by the news which they had received about the Baltic negotiations than by the German proposal for an agreement on the North sea. The fact that the French had not been invited to participate in this arrangement was regarded by the Foreign Office as evidence that the Germans were endeavouring to split the entente.⁹⁹ The French, however, shared neither Grey's fears with regard to this project, nor his readiness to acquiesce in Russia's diplomacy. Pichon considered Germany's North sea proposals to be no more than an attempt to cover her retreat from her secret negotiations with Russia, and their eventual communication to Paris removed any serious difficulty with regard to them.¹⁰⁰

97. Grey to de Salis, 4 Dec.1907, B.D., viii, no.113. Lindberg, pp.170-174.

98. Nicolson to Grey, 4 Dec.1907; Grey to de Salis, 9 Dec.1907; Hardinge to Nicolson, 11 Dec.1907; B.D., viii, nos.114,118 and 122. Nicolson to Grey, 4 Dec.1907, F.O.371/338, tel.255.

99. Tyrrell to Grey, 5 Dec.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/92. Grey to Bertie, 6 Dec.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Minute by Hardinge on Nicolson to Grey, 4 Dec.1907, F.O.371/338, tel.255. Grey to Lister, 9 Dec.1907; Minute by Spicer on Lister to Grey, 11 Dec.1907; B.D., viii, nos.117 and 121.

100. Clemenceau does not seem to have regarded the German proposals with regard to the North sea as a serious threat to France's interests. But he told Lister that he was convinced that Germany 'wished to make an arrangement with Russia in the Baltic, and with us for the North sea, leaving France out of both, and thus compromising her position with her ally and friend'. Lister to Hardinge, 17 Dec.1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177, Pichon to P.Cambon, 10 Dec.1907; P.Cambon to Pichon, 12 Dec.1907; Pichon to P.Cambon, 13 Dec.1907; D.D.F., xi, nos.222, 224, and 225. Grey to Lister, 11 Dec.1907, B.D., viii, no.120.

On the other hand, the contradictory explanations of what had passed with Germany which the representatives of Russia offered to the Quai d'Orsay, did nothing to ease the irritation felt in France over Izvolsky's conduct.¹⁰¹

Clemenceau was particularly vociferous in his complaints about Russian diplomacy. But as Bertie had left Paris on 7 December, it was Lister who had to face his wrath. On 12 December he warned Lister he had learnt that the Russo-German agreement was not yet signed, and he intended to 'brouiller' the cards between Russia and Germany by taking his stand on France's treaty obligations in the Baltic and exercising pressure on Russia. It was, Clemenceau maintained, Izvolsky who had initiated the negotiations, and he considered the situation to be very serious. Lister wrote of this conversation to Grey that if, as Clemenceau hoped, he succeeded in upsetting the Russo-German agreement the Germans would be furious and would seek 'to vent their ill-humour elsewhere, probably Morocco'. 'He', Lister observed, 'believes that one guarantee more of peace has disappeared, and that the negotiations had brought France and Germany a step nearer war'.¹⁰²

101. The Russian and German explanations with regard to what had passed between St. Petersburg and Berlin differed. Bompard was certain 'that negotiations or discussions were in the first place opened by Russia with Berlin, and when they had made a certain progress that Sweden was approached by each Power separately'. Izvolsky continued to insist that there had been no direct negotiations with Germany, but that both governments had simply kept each other informed with regard to what was passing with Sweden. Grey and his officials in London were reluctant to accept the view of Bompard. Nicolson to Grey, 15 Dec. 1907, F.O.371/338, private. Minutes by Grey on Nicolson to Grey, 16 Dec. 1907, F.O.371/338, private. Nicolson to Grey 11 Dec. and 16 Dec. 1907; de Salis to Grey, 13 Dec. 1907; B.D., vii, nos. 123, 128, 130 and 126. Maurice Bompard, Mon Ambassade en Russie, 1903-1908 (Paris, 1937), pp.281-282

102. Lister to Hardinge, 12 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Pichon was more restrained than Clemenceau in his complaints about Russian diplomacy. His idea, he told Lister on 11 December, 'was to drown these arrangements "à deux" by an arrangement "à quatre"'. He did not, he said, 'intend to play the game of Germany by quarrelling with Russia over the matter'. Lister to Grey, 11 Dec. 1907, B.D., viii, no. 121.

Grey was upset by Lister's account. He still clung to the view that Russia had merely consulted with Germany about what should be signed with Sweden.¹⁰³ Moreover, he was not really perturbed about the possibility of Germany coming to terms with Russia. If it were only a matter of guaranteeing the status quo in the Baltic, then he thought that it was hardly worth quarrelling with Germany over it. Although he had no objection to France and Britain associating themselves with Sweden, and although he believed that it was up to the French to decide how they should put pressure upon Russia, he had no desire to see England involved in a conflict with Germany over a seemingly unimportant issue.¹⁰⁴

The point which Grey does not seem to have fully appreciated was that Clemenceau was more upset by the conduct of Izvolsky than by that of the German government. 'Clemenceau', Lister explained, 'doesn't mind this idea of an avalanche of arrangements, desired by Germany...but he is determined that France should be associated with them - and I must say that I think that he is right'. Nevertheless, he too had his reservations about French policy. Despite assurances from Pichon that Clemenceau had no intention of being pushed by Germany into a quarrel with Russia, Lister was afraid that Clemenceau might be playing Germany's game, and that Germany could again find herself in her old position of tertius gaudens. In these circumstances

103. Minute by Grey, B.D., viii, no.124. Hardinge could not see why Izvolsky's word could not be accepted by the French. 'The French', he minuted, 'are in very bad humour and are always very suspicious'. Minute by Hardinge on Nicolson to Grey, 16 Dec.1907, F.O.371/338, tel.264.

104. Grey to Lister, 16 Dec.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Grey to Lister, 17 Dec.1907, F.O.371/338, despt.no.711. Grey wrote to Lord Ripon on 13 December: 'I am not sure that Germany has any motive except to show that she is not isolated'. Grey of Fallodon, i, 149. He thought the French to be 'mistaken' if they extended their objections to the substance of what has been agreed on the Baltic. Their objection, he thought, should be confined to the manner of the negotiations. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 6 Dec.1907, F.O.371/177, despt.no.586.

he decided to leave to Bertie the task of insinuating Grey's views to Clemenceau.¹⁰⁵

Bertie had the opportunity to explain Grey's fears to Clemenceau on 23 December. For his part the French premier assured Bertie that he had no intention of 'quarrelling with Germany or breaking with Russia', but what he could not tolerate was that Russia 'should enter into compacts with Germany behind the back of France respecting matters in which French interests were involved'. If it were simply a matter of a status quo agreement between Germany and Sweden, then he agreed with Grey that it would not much matter, but, he insisted to Bertie that he had 'positive written proof that the negotiations for a Russo-German agreement were initiated by Russia, that terms were arranged and that it went beyond a mere maintenance of the status quo'. Indeed, he claimed that the signing of a Russo-German agreement had been prevented by France's intervention at St. Petersburg.

not much
Clemenceau 'roundly abused' Izvolsky for whom he thought means would have been found for getting rid of, and he threatened to withhold sanction for a loan to Russia until she gave assurances about 'mending her recent conduct'. If and when the Russian government repudiated the proceedings of which he accused them, then, he told Bertie, he would present them with German 'written proof of his accusations'. In the meantime he agreed with Grey that Britain and France should act together if the question of the Aaland islands was raised, and that they could then

105. Lister to Grey, 18 Dec. 1907; Lister to Hardinge, 18 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/177. Pichon explained to Paul Cambon 'nous avons un tel intérêt à entraver les négociations russo-allemandes et s'il est possible, à nous y introduire, que nous devons à cet effet employer tous nos moyens de pression sur le Gouvernement russe'. Pichon to P. Cambon, 18 Dec. 1907, D.D.F.2, xi, no. 228.

require that everything should be disclosed to them.¹⁰⁶

Bertie's report of Clemenceau's language caused some misgiving inside the Foreign Office. As far as Hardinge and his colleagues were concerned, a Russo-German agreement was simply not in prospect. The Russians, Hardinge thought, were 'blindly following' the Spanish notes, and as he doubted if they knew of the Anglo-French declarations in this connexion, he considered it 'not at all impossible that this part of our proceedings will be omitted after the exchange of German and Russian Declarations' with Sweden.¹⁰⁷ On 24 December he complained to Nicolson that the French were 'stupid and would, to satisfy their petty amour propre, like Isvolsky to fall and Mouraviev from Rome to take his place'.¹⁰⁸ Similar sentiments may well have been expressed by Hardinge to Geoffray, the French chargé d'affaires at London. At any rate a report by Geoffray on Hardinge's observations to him was sufficient to cause Clemenceau to summon Bertie to his presence on Christmas Day.¹⁰⁹

Hardinge was subsequently to claim that Geoffray must have exaggerated what he had said to him. According to his own account he had told the French chargé d'affaires that 'we could not see that we or the French had any loco standi for interference with the negotiations in progress between Germany and Sweden'.¹¹⁰ Yet Clemenceau was evidently worried by Geoffray's

106. Clemenceau also asked Bertie to assure Grey that he 'was not going to do anything rash either as regards Russia or as concerns Germany'. Bertie to Grey, 23 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. (This is clearly the letter which Professors Gooch and Temperly refer to in the published British Documents as unidentified: see B.D. viii, 157). Bertie to Grey, (2) 6 December 1907, B.D., viii, no. 115.

107. Hardinge to Lister, 17 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

108. Hardinge to Nicolson, 24 Dec. 1907, B.D., viii, no. 133. But Hardinge also admitted that if Izvolsky did sign a secret agreement with the German government it would be 'the severest knock that the Dual Alliance have had'. Hardinge to Bertie, 20 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

109. Bertie to Grey, 25 Dec. and (2) 6 Dec. 1907, B.D., viii, nos. 134 and 115.

110. Hardinge to Bertie, 29 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

report that Grey was alarmed over his language to Lister. He asked Bertie what it was which 'could not be concerned in by H.M. Government'? When Bertie explained that what he thought had alarmed Grey was his statement that the negotiations between Russia and Germany, which he had taken steps to render abortive, 'had brought France and Germany a step nearer war', Clemenceau protested that Lister must have misunderstood him. He claimed:

What he had stated was that the German Emperor having failed to make an Agreement with England without the participation of France, if he also failed to make one with Russia without France could not be expected to be pleased with two such echecs and his irritability and his "esprit guerrier" would consequently be accentuated which would be a danger to peace; but he had never for a moment intended to convey the idea that he (Clemenceau) and the French Government would become "guerriers".¹¹¹

In substance this was what Lister had reported, for, as he himself explained to Tyrrell, he did 'not for a moment imagine that France would commit any act of aggression against Germany', and he had never intended to convey such an impression.¹¹² Nor had Clemenceau really denied anything which Bertie had said had worried Grey. On the contrary, it was Clemenceau who read into Bertie's words the implication that Grey suspected France of seeking a conflict with Germany.

In a memorandum of 10 May 1908 Bertie simply recorded that what Clemenceau had said to Lister on 12 December was a 'matter of dispute...either Mr. Lister misunderstood him or M.Clemenceau thought better of what he said and repudiated the language

111. Bertie to Grey, 25 Dec.1907, op.cit. According to E.J.Maxse of The National Review, who had the opportunity to talk with Clemenceau in January 1908, the French premier 'keenly resented being credited with warlike sentiments or pugnacious talk'. Maxse to Tyrrell, 8 Jan.1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/109.

112. Lister to Tyrrell, 27 Dec.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

attributed to him'.¹¹³ It is probable that Lister was correct in his subsequent claims that his memory had not failed him.¹¹⁴ Given Clemenceau's state of mind, and the lack of restraint that he was liable to display when provoked, he may well have used the language attributed to him, and have realized only a fortnight later, when it was presented to him by Bertie, the implications which the British government might draw from it. On the other hand Grey's reaction to the French complaint was governed by his own impression that the Germans were bent upon demonstrating that they were not isolated, and Hardinge's conviction that the negotiations were German rather than Russian in origin.¹¹⁵

Bertie attempted to summarise what he considered to be the differences between the British and French governments on this matter in a letter to Hardinge of 28 December. It was the Foreign Office view, he observed, that there had only been an exchange of views between Russia and Germany about their separate negotiations with Sweden. The French, he believed, could probably substantiate ~~their~~ claim that the negotiations were initiated by Izvolsky, and had resulted in an unsigned agreement which went beyond an arrangement on the Baltic status quo, with a German official document or, at least, a copy or photograph of one.¹¹⁶

113. The conversations which Lister and Bertie had with Clemenceau on the subject of the Russo-German accord were recorded in private letters, and in December Bertie and Hardinge agreed that there should be no mention of this correspondence in the official despatches. Bertie's memorandum of 10 May 1908 was drafted with the object of putting these conversations on record. Hardinge to Bertie, 28 Dec.1907; Bertie to Tyrrell, 7 May 1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/177. Bertie to Hardinge, 26 Dec.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Memorandum sent privately to the F.O. by Bertie, 10 May 1908, F.O. 371/529.

114. Lister to Tyrrell, 27 Dec.1907, op cit.

115. Grey was, however, 'quite willing to make it a condition of the abrogation of the Aaland Islands Treaty that Russia should make a clean breast'. He thought that Britain and France might endeavour to associate themselves with the objects of the Baltic arrangements. Grey to Bertie, 29 Dec.1907, B.D., viii, no.136.

116. Bertie to Hardinge, 28 Dec.1907, B.D., viii, no.135.

Yet despite reports from both Bertie and Nicolson which tended to confirm the view that Izvolsky was deliberately withholding information about his direct negotiations with Germany, Grey and Hardinge were reluctant to attribute any deception to him.¹¹⁷

British efforts to restrain Clemenceau from making a provocative intervention in the Baltic negotiations did not prevent a French démarche at St. Petersburg. On 2 January 1908 Clemenceau told Bertie that the result of French representations had been to 'knock on the head the proposed agreement between Russia and Germany.'¹¹⁸ By then, however, Izvolsky had already become disillusioned with German friendship, and such negotiations as continued between Berlin and St. Petersburg were concerned simply with the achievement of a wider arrangement on the Baltic status quo.¹¹⁹

Finally on 23 April two accords were concluded by the Baltic and North sea powers in which they declared their intention to respect and maintain the territorial status quo in the regions limitrophe of their respective seas. Russia failed to secure the assent of the Swedish government to any modification of the 1856 convention, and Izvolsky could do no more than reserve the right to revert to the question of the Aaland islands in the future. For their part Britain and France formally declared that their guarantee of Norway and Sweden had ceased to be valid.¹²⁰

117. Grey to Bertie, 30 Dec. 1907; Hardinge to Bertie, 25 Dec. 1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Grey to Nicolson, 25 Dec. 1907, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/342.

118. Bertie to Grey, 2 Jan. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Sweet, p.472.

119. Lindberg, 189-190.

120. Sweet, pp.476-477.

Bertie did not play a prominent role in the negotiations which preceded the conclusion of the Baltic and North sea agreements. Throughout the discussions on the Baltic his task had never amounted to much more than that of helping to chart the course of Russian diplomacy. Yet the ~~views~~ views expressed by him with regard both to this matter, and to the arrangements made previously with Spain are interesting in so far as they reveal the extent to which he continued to think in terms of Russia and France as potential rivals to Britain. He had hoped originally for a bilateral accord between Britain and Spain because he did not believe that the security of Gibraltar was a permanent French interest, and he had regarded Russia as at least as great a menace to British interests in the Baltic as Germany. The conclusions which he reached about Russian policies and interests contrasted sharply with those of Hardinge who at times displayed an almost naive faith in Izvolsky's honesty of purpose. Bertie accepted French claims that Isvolsky was deceiving them, and he did not dispute the fact that Russia might find advantages in an arrangement with Germany. Indeed, his fears about a possible rapprochement between Berlin and St.Petersburg pre-dated the French revelations of October and November. Izvolsky's conduct had been distinctly unsettling for the French government, and Bertie neither forgot this nor the prospect of a radical re-alignment of forces in eastern Europe.

Chapter IV.

The maintenance of the entente.

During the course of the negotiations which preceded the exchange of notes with Spain neither Bertie nor his colleagues in the Foreign Office felt able to neglect the fact that they might one day have to reckon with a hostile France. The entente might collapse, and France could drift into, or seek, a rapprochement with Germany. In Bertie's view the chances of a French government deliberately pursuing such an accommodation had been somewhat reduced by Germany's intervention in Morocco. The French might previously have been prepared to make great concessions in order to obtain German goodwill, but, he thought, the Moroccan crisis had made it plain to them that their policy was aimed at separating France from England in order to have her at Germany's beck and call. He concluded in March 1907:

Since then (the Moroccan crisis) it has become more and more evident to them that short of France consenting to be in ~~the~~ ^{the} of Germany, there are no means of coming to an understanding with the German Emperor, for to them he is the embodiment of all that is threatening to France in the policy of the German Empire.

Bertie was, however, equally aware that the entente had its opponents in the press and parliament in France. While he had to deal with governments which were dependent upon fluctuating parliamentary majorities, he could hardly ignore their critics and possible successors.¹

The insufficiency of the military support which Britain could render to France in the event of a continental war, the danger of France becoming a battlefield for an Anglo-German conflict and the gains to be had from political and economic co-operation

1. Annual Report for France, 1906, Bertie to Grey, 25 March, 1907, F.O.371/255.

with Germany, had to be weighed by Frenchmen against the advantages to be derived from the continuing association with England. Certainly the idea of working with Germany in extra-European affairs had its attraction for those in France, who sought to consolidate France's position in north Africa and the Middle East. On a despatch from Bertie, which recounted the favourable reception given in France to a speech by Bülow, Eyre Crowe minuted in November 1906 that there was 'still observable in France, even in ministerial circles, a desire to find a "working arrangement" with Germany'. He recalled the friendly support given by Bismarck to Ferry on colonial matters, and pointed to the menace of Germany trying to create friction between Britain and France. Such fears were discounted by Hardinge, who believed that French experience at the hands of the Germans had been too bitter to allow any friendly understanding. They would, he thought, require 'something more than smiles'.² Yet as Bertie observed, 'Germany would probably be ready to make great sacrifices to obtain French support in pursuit of her world policy and the British Empire would be the sufferer'.³

From the French point of view one of the chief flaws in the entente resulted from the small size of the British military establishment. Many people, Bertie commented in his annual report for 1906, feared that British aid would not be sufficient to stay a German invasion of France. They thought that the most Britain could do to help France would be to defend her coasts and cut off supplies by sea to Germany. 'It is this frame of mind', he observed, 'which induces many Frenchmen to think it would be wiser

2. Minutes by Eyre Crowe and Hardinge on Bertie to Grey, 19 Nov. 1906, F.O.371/74, despt.no.453.

3. Annual Report for France, 1906, op.cit.

if possible to come to terms with Germany - hateful though such a policy would be - than to rely on English assistance in resisting German aggression'.⁴ It was a problem which worried some of the staunchest supporters of the Anglo-French understanding. Even before his entry into Sarrien's government, Clemenceau had suggested to Lister that Britain might attempt to secure for France the use of the Italian army.⁵ During the next three years he persistently pressed the British government and its representatives to adopt a system of conscription such as would better enable Britain to play a part in a continental land war.

It was perhaps surprising in these circumstances that Clemenceau made no great effort to secure any definite military commitment from Britain to France.⁶ Bertie assumed that although the French would have liked some more tangible assurance of British aid, they realized the difficulties which stood in the way of securing this, and contented themselves with the conviction that Britain's interests would compel her to support France in a war with Germany.⁷ Nevertheless, in defending the entente in parliament, Clemenceau did attempt to maintain the impression that there were

4. Ibid.

5. Memorandum by Lister enclosed in Bertie to Grey, 2 Jan. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Clemenceau raised this issue again with Bertie in September 1906. Bertie to Grey, 10 Sept. 1906. Grey MSS., F.O.800/49. Grey was unyielding on the issue of conscription. When the question was raised once more in May 1908 he minuted: 'The real counterpose to the German Army must be the French and Russian armies, while we maintain Naval supremacy'. Minute by Grey on Lister to Grey, 28 May 1908, F.O.371/455, despt.no.217.

6. A recent biography of Clemenceau refers to his attempts to 'get a British military commitment'. Yet there is little evidence to support the view that this was what Clemenceau was seeking. He told Mallet in July 1905 that he thought an Anglo-German war to be only a matter of time, and that France and England had been drawn together by a common danger. 'For this reason', Mallet noted, 'he rejoiced to think that the understanding between France and England must be a permanent one and would exist independently of any written alliance, for which he thought the time had not come'. D.R. Watson, Georges Clemenceau (London, 1974), pp.222-226. Memorandum by Mallet, 13 July 1905, Lansdowne MSS., F.O.800/145.

7. General Report for France, 1908, Bertie to Grey, 30 April 1909, F.O.371/669.

more binding ties between Britain and France than those contained in the convention of 1904. Thus when on 20 November 1906 he was questioned by the nationalist senator, Gaudin de Villaine about the existence of an Anglo-French military convention, his reply was both cryptic and evasive. He told the senate that he had only been in office a few weeks, and that he had not seen anything of that kind in the documents laid before him. There might, he contended, be occasions when a government 'conscious of its responsibilities' ought not to reply to such questions, and, he added, 'it was not right that anything should be said from the Tribune which might "decourager des amitiés" or "rompre des accords"'. The implication was, as Hardinge recognized, that there might be a military convention of which Clemenceau did not know.

Within the Foreign Office Clemenceau's explanation caused some consternation especially as it was feared that it might provoke a similar question in the Commons. Grey, however, was more sympathetic towards Clemenceau's predicament than were his officials. He thought that it was an awkward question for Clemenceau to have to reply to without giving the impression of discouraging the entente. If the matter were raised in Parliament, then Grey was intent upon avoiding a denial of a military convention.⁸ Yet public criticism of the understanding with England could not be contained simply by avoiding a definite statement upon the true nature of the relationship.

Clear expression of the concern felt in France about the value of Britain as a friend and potential ally was given by André Tardieu, the foreign editor of Le Temps in an address delivered

8. Bertie to Grey, 21 Nov. 1906, F.O. 371/74, despt. no. 463, and minutes by Hardinge and Grey (published without minutes as B.D.iii, no. 443). Minutes by Eyre Crowe, Hardinge and Grey, on Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov. 1906, B.D.iii, no. 444. P. Cambon to Louis, 23 Nov. 1906, D.D.F.2, x, no. 305.

on 22 February 1907 at the École libre des sciences politiques.

He objected that though the friendship of England was a 'precious guarantee of peace', it would in time of war be unavailing in withholding a German invasion of France. What, however, Bertie found more remarkable about the lecture was the abandonment by Tardieu of the violently polemical tone which he had hitherto adopted against Germany. Instead, he spoke of the need for France to show goodwill towards Germany, and of the possibility of an arrangement between the two powers.⁹

Bertie was perturbed by Tardieu's language, but he was not inclined to over-exaggerate the importance of those in France who favoured the idea of an accommodation with Germany. Its chief promoters were in his estimation, the German subsidized press, a limited number of office-seeking politicians, and those nationalists and ultra-royalists, who considered Germany to be more antagonistic to the republican system than England. 'Other partisans of such an understanding', he observed in the following year, 'are those who for financial reasons desire closer relations with a country which requires capital and where profitable business might be done'.¹⁰ This seemed to be only too apparent to Bertie in the attitude assumed by French financiers and their representatives towards the German sponsored Bagdad railway project.

Tardieu in his address outlined an arrangement whereby Germany might agree to acquiesce in France's acquisition of

9. Lister Grey, 27 Feb. 1907; Bertie to Grey, 23 March 1907; F.O. 371/253, despt. nos. 109 and 146. André Tardieu was the foreign editor of Le Temps from 1903 until 1914.

10. Annual Report for France, 1907, F.O. 371/456.

Morocco in return for French co-operation in the financing of the Bagdad railway. Already as the result of an agreement concluded with the Deutsche Bank in 1903 the French-controlled Imperial Ottoman Bank had been allotted a 30% share in the financing of the railway.¹¹ But, with a view to protecting France's railway network in Syria and the interests of her Russian ally, Delcassé had persuaded his cabinet colleagues not to sanction the participation of French capital in the undertaking. The Ottoman Bank had thus been denied the opportunity of floating its railway securities on the bourse.¹²

Grey, who had no desire to see the line continued to the Persian gulf without British participation, sought to work in common accord with France and Russia on this issue.¹³ He was fortunate in having to deal with Clemenceau. During November 1906 both he and Pichon assured Bertie that Joseph Caillaux, the minister of finance, had prevailed upon the Crédit Lyonnais to discontinue negotiations for a loan to the German backers of the railway. Similarly in the following month Pichon promised Bertie that he would keep an eye upon the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas to see that it did nothing to help the Germans.¹⁴ But Bertie could not be

11. A.S.J.Baster, The International Banks (London, 1935), pp.97-106. W.I.Shorrock, 'The Origin of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon: the Railroad Question, 1901-1914'. International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, i (1970), 133-136. Memorandum by Mr. Block respecting Franco-German Economic Penetration enclosed in O'Connor to Grey, 3 July 1906, B.D., v, no.147.

12. Ibid., Shorrock, pp.137-140.

13. Grey to Bertie, 6 April 1906, B.D., vi, no.222. Grey to Cromer, 15 April 1906, Grey MSS., F.O.800/46. Already in 1903 Lansdowne had refused to sanction a British participation in the Bagdad railway. On the diplomatic background to this decision see: R.M.Francis, 'The British withdrawal from the Bagdad Railway Project in April 1903', Historical Journal, xvi (1973), 168-178.

14. Bertie to Mallet, 10 Nov., 11 Nov. and 21 Nov.1906; Bertie to Hardinge, 2 Dec.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174. Bertie to Grey, 15 Nov. and 2 Dec.1906, B.D., vi, nos.239 and 242. Bertie subsequently commented: 'M.Clemenceau is more ready than were previous French ministers to make use of the undoubtedly powerful lever which the Government control over the quotation of securities on the Paris money markets gives to French cabinets'. Annual Report for France, 1907, op.cit.

confident as to for how long French governments would be prepared to maintain this attitude. Rouvier, himself a powerful financier had, as minister of finance, opposed Delcassé on the question of French participation, and there was no reason to suppose that at some future date a French government might not be prepared to view the railway in a more favourable light.¹⁵ Moreover, Bertie doubted the adequacy of the control exercised by the French government over the Paris capital Market. They, he thought, attached an 'exaggerated importance to the political weapon' which they possessed in the bourse. There were, he estimated, other less direct channels through which French capital could pass into the railway.¹⁶

At Constantinople neither Constans, the French ambassador there, nor the agents of French finance were inclined towards working with their British colleagues in order to thwart German ambitions.¹⁷ Britain's representatives received little or no support from the French Embassy when, during the autumn of 1906, they attempted to apply such conditions to the granting of a 3% rise in Turkish customs dues as would prevent any surplus revenues being employed as security for the financing of the railway.¹⁸ At the same time a French group of financiers, with

15. Ubi supra Shorrocks. Rouvier was president of the Banque Française pour le Commerce et l'Industrie. On his ability to mix politics with high finance see: G.P. Palmade, French Capitalism in the Nineteenth Century (English edition, London, 1972), pp.182-186. Octave Homberg, Les coulisses de L'histoire: souvenirs 1898-1928 (Paris, 1923), pp.46-47, M.Gignoux, Rouvier et les finances (Paris 1931).

16. D.C.M. Platt, Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815-1914 (Oxford, 1968), p.8.

17. Jean Constans, the French ambassador at Constantinople from 1899 till 1909, had long favoured French participation in the railway, and was unhappy about France's association with a power like Britain which persisted in alienating the Porte. J.B. Wolf, The Diplomatic History of the Bagdad Railway (Columbia, 1936), p.34. Extract from Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1906, B.D., v, 169 Block to Hardinge, 24 Jan. and 14 May 1907; F.O.371/344, private. Hardinge to Goschen, 9 March 1908; Hardinge to Goschen, Nicolson, 1 April 1908; Hardinge MSS., 13.

18. This subject is dealt with in more detail in K.A. Hamilton, 'An attempt to form an Anglo-French "Industrial Entente"', Middle Eastern Studies, xi (1975), 51-53, Block to Hardinge, 20 Oct. 1906, F.O.371/155, private.

the tacit support of the Ottoman Bank, appeared to be acting in collusion with the Germans. Neither an attempt by Bertie to persuade Pichon of the pro-German sympathies of Auboyneau, the director general of the Ottoman Bank, nor the efforts of the Foreign Office to secure French collaboration at Constantinople, met with any real success.¹⁹ During December Pichon tried to ensure that Berger, the representative of the French bondholders on the council of the Ottoman Public Debt, would co-operate with Sir Adam Block, his British colleague. Constans, however, was reluctant to follow Pichon's instructions, and to the irritation of the French cabinet, and the distress of Block, Berger refused to abandon the German cause.²⁰

Grey felt clear in his own mind that 'the French Gov(ernmen)t have done their best for us in the matter of the Debt'. But a different view was taken by Mallet, who considered that Pichon's action had been worse than useless as Constans was in the 'financial ring' at Constantinople.²¹ Already on 21 November Bertie had warned Mallet that there seemed to be an inclination on the part of French financiers to revert to their former schemes for obtaining a substantial participation in the Bagdad railway.

19. Block to Hardinge, 15 Oct. 1906, F.O.371/155, private. Memorandum communicated to M. Cambon, 24 Oct. 1906, F.O.371/155. Mallet to Bertie, 18 Nov. 1906; Bertie to Mallet, 21 Nov. 1906; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174. Gaston Auboyneau was the director general of the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Paris.

20. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec. 1906, B.D., vi, no. 242. Constans to Pichon 11 Dec. 1906; Pichon to Constans, 13 Dec. and 15 Dec. 1906; D.D.F.2, nos. 354, 358 and 361. Tschirschky to Metternich, 19 Dec. 1906; Marschall to Bülow, 9 Jan. 1907; G.P., xxvi, nos. 7650 and 7651. Grey to Bertie, 29 Dec. 1906, F.O.371/144, despt. no. 722 (part of this is published as B.D., vi, no. 243). Bertie to Hardinge, 19 Jan. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Grey, 23 Jan. 1907, F.O.371/340, despt. no. 44. The classic work on the control of Turkey's finances by the great powers remains D.C. Blaisdell, European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire (New York, 1929).

Adam Block had been the chief dragoman of the British embassy at Constantinople. After 1903 he was the representative of the British and Dutch bondholders on the council of the Ottoman Public Debt. Commandant Berger was the French representative on the council.

21. Minute by Grey with Grey to Bertie, 29 Dec. 1906, ibid. Mallet to Bertie, 14 Dec. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

Moreover, the explanation which he subsequently received from Auboyneau of events at Constantinople did little to dispel his doubts about the French financial world.²²

For its part the Ottoman Bank continued to keep open its option with regard to participation in the railway project, and in March 1907 Auboyneau travelled to Berlin for discussions on the subject.²³ These were followed by a visit to Paris by Zander, the president of the Bagdad and Anatolian railway company, and at the end of the month the French and German press took up with vigour the idea of a Franco-German understanding on a basis similar to that suggested by Tardieu. When Le Matin gave unusual prominence to two articles from the Berliner Tage blatt which advocated an accord on Morocco and the railway, Bertie concluded that the Paris paper was trying to familiarize the French public with the idea.²⁴ In the meanwhile his colleagues in London assumed from the contents both of his reports and those which they had received from Berlin and Munich that Germany was again seeking to separate France from England.²⁵

Whilst Clemenceau remained in office, it seemed unlikely that the Germans would succeed in dividing the entente. Yet in the spring of 1907 there was a distinct possibility that his government might not survive, and Clemenceau was only too anxious to emphasize to Bertie that his successors might lean towards a

22. Bertie to Mallet, 21 Nov.1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

Bertie to Hardinge, 19 Jan.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

23. But according to Paul Cambon Auboyneau told Zander, during his visit to Berlin that a French group could not participate in the Bagdad railway unless an English group joined in. Grey to Bertie, 4 March 1907, B.D., vi, no.245.

24. Bertie to Grey, 29 March, 7 April, 8 April, 10 April, 12 April, 13 April, 17 April, 28 April, 29 April 1907; F.O.371/253, despt. nos.165, 176, 183, 187, 192, 193, 197 and 215. Cartwright to Grey 11 April and 10 June 1907, F.O.371/253, despt.nos.49 and 59. Lascelles to Grey, 10 April, 17 April and 1 May 1907, F.O.371/253, despt.nos.139, 152 and 177.

25. Minute by Eyre Crowe on extract from L'Europe of 28 March 1907, F.O.371/254. Minutes by Eyre Crowe and Spicer on Bertie to Grey, 29 March 1907, F.O.371/253, despt.no.165. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 13 April 1907, F.O.371/257 no.177.

closer relationship with Germany. First Pichon on 30 March and then Clemenceau on 3 April warned Bertie that Millerand might be brought into office.²⁶ A prominent and talented deputy, Millerand had refused to accept any office in Clemenceau's ministry other than that of the Quai d'Orsay, and now, in opposition, he was showing signs of favouring a rapprochement with Germany.²⁷ Clemenceau claimed that he had written proof that Millerand was intriguing with the German ambassador, and that Germany's objective was to overthrow the government in order to bring about an understanding with France. Nevertheless, he surprised Bertie when he took the somewhat unusual constitutional step of warning Fallieres against Millerand's appointment. In a statement which may well have been connected with British hesitations over the negotiations then taking place with Spain, he urged Bertie that

...no time should be lost in settling up the questions still open in which England and France were interested as his successors might not be so coulants as the present French government.

This left no doubt in Bertie's mind that if, as he thought possible Rouvier were to become minister of finance in a new administration, he would come to terms with Germany over the Bagdad railway without much regard for Britain's interests.²⁸

In Bertie's estimation the best means of avoiding a concession by France to Germany on the railway was for Britain to continue to give the French government all its support. On

26. Bertie to Grey, 31 Jan., 11 Feb. and 19 May 1907; Lavino to Bertie, 6 Feb. 1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Lister to Hardin 28 Feb. 1907, F.O.371/253, private. Bertie to Grey, 31 March 1907, B.D., vii, no.22.

27. General Report for France, 1906, annex no.1, F.O.371/253.

28. When on 30 March Pichon told Bertie that he intended to warn Fallieres against Millerand, Bertie supposed that the foreign minister was intoxicated. He reported that Pichon's stomach had been upset by beer and that he was taking grogs 'to which being generally a water drinker he is not accustomed'. Bertie to Grey, 31 March and 3 April 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

18 April he wrote to Grey about the prospect of a Franco-German arrangement that he did not think that anything would come of it with the present French government 'so long as they felt confidence in our friendship and support'. But, he added, 'if the Government fall, which everyone says is certain, the Germans will no doubt squeeze one out of the next ministry'.²⁹ It was in these apparently precarious circumstances that Campbell-Bannerman made a brief, but for Bertie, unfortunate, incursion into foreign affairs.

On 9 April the prime minister, who had been enjoying a private visit to France, agreed to meet Clemenceau at the British embassy at Paris. Once in conversation with his opposite number, Clemenceau raised the subject of Britain's military unpreparedness for continental warfare. Having emphasized the danger posed by Germany to the European status quo, he told Campbell-Bannerman that he regretted the reductions being made in the size of the British army by the Liberal government. Campbell-Bannerman's reply was, to say the least, a shock for Clemenceau, for, according to the latter's account, he said that 'he did not think that English public opinion would allow British troops being employed on the Continent of Europe'. Alarmed at this declaration, and anxious lest it meant some change in British foreign policy, Clemenceau informed Bertie of it, and added that the prime minister 'm'a jeté ça en pleine figure'. He put it to Bertie that the effect on his colleagues of such an exposition of British policy would be disastrous.³⁰

29. Bertie to Grey, 17 April 1907, F.O.371/253, despt.no.197. Bertie to Grey, 18 April 1907, B.D., vii, no.31.

30. John Wilson, C-B. A Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (London, 1973), pp.540-544. Bertie to Grey, 11 April 1907, B.D., vi, no.9.

Campbell-Bannerman subsequently denied the accuracy of Clemenceau's charges. He claimed that though he had dwelt upon the reluctance of the British people to undertake obligations, which would commit them to a continental war, he had made 'no statement to the effect that in no circumstances should we allow British troops to be employed on the continent of Europe'. Grey was at pains to assure Bertie that the prime minister had said nothing new. In the event of Britain being involved in a war, he insisted that her armed forces would be used in the way in which they would be most effective.³¹ Mallet, who personally believed that in the event of an unprovoked German attack upon France, Britain would intervene, observed to Bertie that he thought Clemenceau had been 'very stupid to raise the question again now, à propos of nothing and with C-B of all people'.³²

Bertie could hardly have been pleased with the results of the prime minister's visit. Yet, while he seized upon the occasion to deliver another polemic on the necessity of supporting France, his response was in all fairly calm. The prime minister's statement to Clemenceau had, in his opinion, been 'intended as a douch to cool any martial ardour that he might feel in reliance on any military support from us'.³² He suspected that Clemenceau

31. Campbell-Bannerman to Grey, 12 April 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/100. Grey to Bertie, 13 April and 19 April 1907; Bertie to Grey, 17 April 1907; B.D., vi, nos.10, 14, 11 and 15. Hardinge subsequently explained to the king that he thought that the prime minister's version of what had happened at Paris was the correct one 'since it is undeniable that he actually contemplated the possibility of such action being at a certain moment of last year'. Hardinge to Edward VII, 24 April 1907, Hardinge MSS., 9. On Campbell-Bannerman's relations with the Foreign Office see: J.F.Harris and Cameron Hazlehurst, 'Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister', History, iv (1970), 380-381. M.L.Dockrill, The Formulation of a Continental Foreign Policy by Great Britain, 1908-1912, (unpublished Ph.D.thesis, University of London, 1969), p.20.

32. Bertie to Grey, 17 April 1907, B.D. vi, no.11.

had put the case 'too straight', and that Campbell-Bannerman, in order to avoid giving a distinct answer, or making a definite statement, 'shied at it and ran into the ditch on the opposite side of the road laying too much stress on the unwillingness of the British public to land men on the continent'. He warned Mallet:

The danger for us to avoid will be to make the French lose confidence in our support and drive them into some arrangement with Germany harmful to us while not being harmful to France. At the same time we must not encourage the French to rely on our material land support to the extent of making them beard the Germans.

During his embassy at Paris this was to remain Bertie's formula for the maintenance of the entente.³³

Bertie's desire to maintain French confidence in the friendship of England did not blind him to the fact that French statesmen were quite capable of using the menace of a Franco-German accord in order to extract concessions from the British government. Clemenceau appeared to be doing just this when, during the summer of 1907, he attempted to counter Grey's efforts to free Britain from the obligations imposed on her by the Brussels sugar convention of 1902 to levy counter-vailing duties upon imports of bounty-fed sugar.³⁴ In international terms this was a relatively minor

33. Bertie to Mallet, 15 April 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. Bertie's handling of Clemenceau won him praise from Mallet. 'You seem', he observed, 'to have smoothed C's ruffled feathers with great success'. Mallet to Bertie, 18 April 1907, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. In the following year when Campbell-Bannerman was again in France Bertie strove to prevent another upset. When the prime minister was invited by Sir Thomas Barday, a lawyer, and according to Bertie a 'self-advertiser with no authority whatever', to attend at a dinner at which would be present some of Clemenceau's political opponents, Bertie intervened to persuade Campbell-Bannerman not to accept. Bertie to Grey, 6 Jan.1908; Grey to Bertie 6 Jan.1908; Campbell-Bannerman to Bertie, 7 Jan.1908, Bertie to Campbell-Bannerman, 7 Jan.1908, tel; Grey to Bertie, 8 Jan.1908; Campbell-Bannerman to Bertie, 8 Jan.1908; Bertie to Hardinge, 9 Jan.1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

34. Grey to P.Cambon, 12 June 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174. Grey to Bertie, 11 July 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. On the Brussels sugar convention see: E.H. Phelps Brown and J.Wiseman, A course in Applied Economics (London,1964), pp.19-20. 'The Sugar Convention', memorandum by Lloyd George, 16 April 1907, Cab.37/88 no.46.

matter, but while Grey had to take account of the views of the Liberal free traders, Clemenceau had to reckon with the effects of such a move by Britain upon the sugar producers of northern France. At a time when his government was already having to face serious disturbances in the wine producing regions of the south, he was doubly anxious to avoid trouble in the north.³⁵ The situation, however, hardly justified his attempt to link the survival of the sugar convention with the future of the entente.

On 9 July Clemenceau warned Bertie that the Austrian government 'no doubt instigated thereto by Germany, were endeavouring to form a combination with Germany and Italy to keep out of their countries English sugar products'. The Austrian and German ambassadors at Paris, he said, were intriguing with the deputies Millerand, Doumer, and Reinach in order to get up an agitation in favour of French co-operation in the combination, which would be 'an economic one ostensibly, but in reality have the political objective of detaching France from England'. His conclusion was that if the matter was not arranged between England and France, and England withdrew from the convention, the political situation 'would inevitably become serious'. 'France, he observed, 'might be forced by public opinion into an economic combination which would lead to important political results in the near future'.³⁶

35. On the troubles in the Midi see: J.Chastenet, Histoire de la troisieme republique (6 vols., Paris, 1952-1963), iv, 36-38. Clemenceau still had to reckon with Millerand's opposition but after winning a vote of confidence in June the position of his government improved considerably. Bertie to Grey, 20 June 1907, F.O.371/254, despt.314. Bertie to Grey, 21 June 1907, F.O.371/254, tel.29. Bertie to Grey 21 Oct.1907, F.O.371/256, despt.no.507. Despite assurances from Lloyd George that British jam manufacturers did not think that their products would suffer much from counter-vailing duties being imposed upon, Grey was anxious to avoid any unpleasantness over the fate of the convention and was prepared to examine means by which it might be changed to suit the Liberal government. Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 10 June 1907, Campbell-Bannerman MSS., (B.M.) Add.52514. Grey to Lloyd George, Grey MSS., F.O.800/89.

36. Bertie to Grey, 9 July 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

This warning was repeated to Bertie on the following day by Paul Cambon and Pichon. They argued that unless Russia adhered to the convention, Britain's attitude would bring about its abrogation, France would be forced into a combination with the object of excluding English sugar products, and the 'ultimate result an anti-English crusade led by Germany'.³⁷

The French argument carried little weight with Bertie. He was not convinced that the entente was likely to be menaced by a continental coalition based upon a quarrel about imported sugar. Though he admitted that Britain's policy would have an 'unfortunate effect' in France and might force her into a continental combination injurious to British interests, he did not see why the French government 'should be dragged... into a political combination of an anti-English tendency'. The French government, he estimated, could keep out of any such combinations if they desired to, for the 'entente ought to be able to survive such tea-cup storms'.³⁸

Bertie was equally clear in his mind that there was little to be gained from yielding to every whim of the French government. He had no sympathy for the suggestion made to him by Pichon on 5 June 1907 that Fallières should visit London that autumn. Unenthusiastic at the best of times about such state occasions, he suspected that the French had learned of the forthcoming visit to London of the German emperor, and that Pichon's proposal was

37. Paul Cambon also warned Bertie that the effect of Britain's withdrawal from the convention would ultimately be to push up the price of sugar. Bertie to Grey, 10 July 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

38. Bertie to Grey, 11 July and 14 July 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. For the details of the negotiations which eventually led to the modification of the Brussels convention in a sense favourable to Britain, see: Correspondence respecting the additional act to the Brussels Sugar Convention of March 5, 1902, signed at Brussels. August 28, 1907. Commercial No.10 (1907), Cd. 3780.

intended as a counterblast. It was in his view a 'foolish idea', and he endeavoured to discourage it. He advised Grey to inform the French that the visit might be regarded as a political demonstration by other powers, and connected with the negotiations concerning the Scandinavian states.³⁹

Even after it had been decided that the French president should go to London in May 1908 for the Anglo-French exhibition at Shepherds Bush, Bertie was unhappy about advertising the fact. He disagreed with a proposal made by Tyrrell that if the emperor's visit were accompanied by demonstrations and intrigues, Fallières invitation to England should be announced on the day of his departure.⁴⁰ In the circumstances contemplated by Tyrrell, Bertie considered that the French government would let it be known for their own ends that Fallières was to visit England. 'Let them do the counter trumpet blowing', he observed, 'or move us to announce the invitation'. For the British government to do this unsolicited would, he thought, be 'an unnecessary pitting of one section of thought in England against another'.⁴⁰

Bertie could not, however, neglect the extent to which the idea of a Franco-German accommodation continued to find favour in influential political circles in France. Such an arrangement might well free France from the threat of German interference in Morocco at a time when both the French and Spanish governments were finding it increasingly necessary to resort to coercive action

39. Bertie to Grey, 5 June and 21 June 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie to Hardinge, 6 June 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164. The king supported Bertie in this matter, but while Grey agreed with the ambassador's advice, he thought that if the German emperor's visit were exploited in any politically undesirable way, it might well be considered whether there should be a presidential visit. Hardinge to Bertie, 12 June 1907, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. Grey to Bertie, 19 June 1907, B.D., vi, no.45.
40. Bertie to Tyrrell, 10 Nov. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/164.

there.⁴¹ Even Clemenceau had told Radolin in March 1907 of his desire that there should be good relations between France and Germany, and that all incidents, however insignificant, should be submitted to frank discussions.⁴² When therefore, Étienne, a constant advocate of a forward policy in Morocco, visited Germany in July 1907, there was good reason for Bertie to suspect his motives, and to speculate about the likely outcome of any talks which he might have with German statesmen.

Étienne, who had been invited by the prince of Monaco to accompany him on board his yacht at Kiel, attempted to assure Bertie on 19 June that his object was neither to intrigue nor to 'faire de la politique'. Yet Bertie doubted if he would confine himself to exchanging pleasantries with the German emperor and Bülow.⁴³ In fact while Étienne rebuffed William II's suggestion for a Franco-German alliance, he did promise to work in France for better relations with Germany. He also proposed that financial co-operation, even in Morocco, might be a good preparation for a political understanding.⁴⁴ Moreover, after his return to Paris in August he published an article in La Dépêche Coloniale in which he questioned the value for France of the entente with England.⁴⁵

41. On the problems encountered by France and Spain in Morocco in the aftermath of Algeciras see: I.C.Barlow, The Agadir Crisis (Chapel Hill, 1940), pp.44-67; and Jean Garniag, L'expansion coloniale de la France sous la Troisième République (Paris, 1968) pp.265-268.

42. Radolin to Bülow, 15 March 1907, G.F., xxi, pt.2, no.7317.

43. Bertie to Grey, 19 June 1907, F.O.371/255, despt.no.311.

44. William II to Bülow, 26 June 1907; Bülow to William II, 27 June and 30 June 1907; F.Whyte, pp.214-220. Bertie to Grey, 12 Sept.1907 and 3 Feb.1908, B.D., vi, nos.36 and 79.

45. Extract from Dépêche Coloniale enclosed in Bertie to Grey, 12 Sept.1907, F.O.371/255, despt.no.442 (published without the extract as B.D., vi, no.35).

Bertie was not greatly disturbed by the activities of Étienne. He had none too high an opinion of him either before or after his excursion to Kiel, and he suspected that the prince of Monaco was serving German interests. Étienne's acceptance of the prince's invitation was, he concluded, 'probably prompted by the desire to do a little profitable business by holding out to influential Germans whom he might meet, the prospect of obtaining French financial assistance for German enterprise'.⁴⁶ Despite the fact that Pichon had told Radolin that he had encouraged Étienne's visit, both the foreign minister and Clemenceau disclaimed any official support for the mission, and there is no indication that Bertie was inclined to disbelieve them. Moreover, the reports which he received about Étienne's discussions were to the effect that they had foundered on the subject of the territorial settlement between France and Germany in Europe.⁴⁸

The apparently inconclusive results of these talks seem in the long run to have helped to convince Bertie that there was little likelihood of a general political arrangement between France and

46. Lister to Mallet, 27 Jan. 1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie commented in 1908: 'M. Etienne is not wealthy and he is generally credited with being corrupt'. Annual Report for France, 1907. op.cit

47. Lister to Grey, 6 July 1907, F.O.371/255, despt.no.337. Bertie to Grey, 9 July 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Radolin to AA, 5 July 1907; Radolin to Bülow, 14 July 1907; G.P., xxi, pt.2, nos 7257 and 7263. Etienne also reported informally to Jules Cambon and Pichon. P.Cambon to H.Cambon, 9 July 1907, Correspondance ii pp.232-233. J.J.Cooke, New French Imperialism, 1880-1910: the Third Republic and Colonial Expansion (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.148-152. E.W.Edwards, 'The Franco-German Agreement on Morocco, 1909'. English Historical Review, lxxviii (1963), 485-486.

48. Bertie to Grey, 9 July 1907, F.O.371/286, tel.140. Bertie to Grey, 12 Sept.1907, B.D., vi, no.79. In February 1908 Delcassé told Bertie that the German emperor had raised with Etienne the subject of a general understanding between France and Germany. But, according to Delcassé, Étienne had replied that for such an arrangement to be feasible 'it would be necessary that "la France fût reconstituée" or words to that effect'. The emperor had then dropped the subject. Paul Cambon sent his son a similar account of the meeting. Bertie to Grey, 3 Feb.1908, B.D., vi, no.79. P.Cambon to H.Cambon; Correspondance ii, 232-233.

Germany. 'So long', he observed in his report for 1907, 'as Alsace-Lorraine remains part of the German Empire there cannot, in my opinion, be any real political understanding of any consequence between France and Germany'. From this he also concluded that France was now so dependent on England in matters of foreign policy that 'pressure might be used to bring the French Government to show a more accommodating spirit in some of the questions in which the two countries are not entirely agreed'.⁴⁹

Nowhere was disagreement more apparent between Britain and France than in colonial and extra-European affairs. The agreement of 8 April 1904 had attempted to solve the outstanding colonial difficulties between the two powers, but it had produced fewer solutions which could be regarded in any sense as final. They continued to quarrel over both those issues which the convention of 1904 had purported to deal, and those which the negotiators had left aside. Matters which had been the subject of earlier arrangement retained a capacity for causing ill feeling and controversy between otherwise friendly governments. While the German challenge in Morocco, and Grey's concern for the political equilibrium in Europe helped to forge the Anglo-French understanding British and French representatives in the extra-European world often failed to embrace the spirit of co-operation. In Morocco old rivalries persisted and came peculiarly to the fore once the German threat receded.⁵⁰ Moreover, other ministries and other

49. Annual Report for France, 1907 op.cit. Pichon had little faith in the honesty of Germany's intentions. He thought that she was simply trying 'se réserver les moyens de créer une diversion de notre côté, le jour où elle serait conduite à un conflit avec l'Angleterre'. Pichon to J. Cambon, 18 July, 1907, E.D.F. 2, xi, no. 80.

50. The Foreign Office was very irritated in the spring of 1908 by what appeared to be French collusion in the flouting of the Algeciras act by a German firm which wished to have the concession for the construction of drainage works at Tangier and harbour works at Larache. Lowther to Eyre Crowe, 13 April 1908, F.O. 371/486, private. Lowther to Grey, 13 April 1908, F.O. 371/486, despt. 85, and minute by Eyre Crowe. Lowther to Grey, 2 May 1908, F.O. 371/486, tel. 19, and minute by Eyre Crowe. Grey to Bertie, 28 April, 6 May and 7 May 1908, F.O. 371/486, despt. nos. 179, 197 and 198.

departments of state proved less willing than the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay to endorse a policy of cordial collaboration. They tended, at times, to put immediate and local interests before the wider aspects of the entente.

Bertie's role in the handling of such issues was in some cases limited to no more than communicating to, and confirming with, the French foreign minister the results of discussions carried on by British and French officials elsewhere. Very often the problem which he had to face was that of overcoming the irritating delays which seemed to attend the settlement of any question which the French did not regard as of major political importance. This meant more than simply persuading the foreign minister to act with more haste, but also attempting to strengthen his hands against his colleagues and some of the officials of the Quai d'Orsay.⁵¹

Bertie registered his disenchantment with the French in his annual report for 1907. There he reminded Grey that the French were ready to accept all the British support that was ungrudgingly given to them. Yet, he claimed

...they have not met our reasonable requests on the question of the Newfoundland fisheries; they did not act with us at the Hague Conference to the extent which they might have done without detriment to the interests of France; they do not accept our views with regard to the Baghdad Railway; they want to go back on the loss of what they have given in Egypt for valuable consideration under the convention of 1904; they do not act loyally with us in matters Abyssinian, and it is doubtful what their attitude will be in questions affecting the Persian Gulf.⁵²

51. Bertie observed in March 1910: 'It is difficult to get M. Pichon to examine for himself any question which requires more than cursory study. He depends too much for enlightenment and direction on the department, and, in cases in which the ministry for colonies is interested on the minister for colonies'. Annual Report for France, 1909, Bertie to Grey, 10 March 1910, F.O.371/898.
52. Annual Report for France, 1907, op.cit.

Bertie's complaints echoed those of other British officials. Eyre Crowe was particularly critical of what he stigmatized as the 'well-known French method of dealing with unpleasant questions... which may be characterized as "pigeon-hole and no answer"'.⁵³ The troubles which arose from the imprecise wording of the 1904 agreement as it affected the Newfoundland fisheries and the enforcement of the colonial laws and regulations were a constant source of irritation to the Foreign Office.⁵⁴ When in March 1908 Paul Cambon protested over the fining of a French fishing vessel, Eyre Crowe minuted that the French 'permit themselves in addressing us a lattitude which borders on the impertinent'. He likened their ambassador's communication to those which the Foreign Office used to receive 'when relations between the two countries were little removed from open hostility'.⁵⁵ In similar terms Eldon Gorst complained persistently from Egypt about the efforts made by the French representative and colony there to obstruct the efficient administration of the Khedivate.⁵⁶ The French, Hardinge lamented to Bertie in July 1908, were exceedingly tiresome in Egypt and had not really observed the letter and the spirit of the 1904 agreement.⁵⁷

53. Minute by Eyre Crowe on communication from the French embassy, 16 Jan. 1908, F.O. 371/454.

54. 'Note sur l'état des négociations franco-britanniques relatives a Terre Neuve' from the Direction des affaires politiques et commerciales, 21 May 1908, N.S. 21 (A.A.E.) Memorandum by Eyre Crowe, 5 Jan. 1908, F.O. 371/453.

55. Minute by Eyre Crowe on P. Cambon to Grey, 23 March 1908, F.O. 371/453. Eyre Crowe wrote of the fishing dispute in 1911: 'I venture to think that it is the French Colonial Office, with its notoriously anti-British traditions, and the influence of a few deputies representing the department from which French fishermen have been in the habit of sailing to Newfoundland that have induced the French government to raise these questions'. Minute by Eyre Crowe on memorandum by the Colonial Office, 7 Jan. 1911, F.O. 371/1116.

56. Eldon Gorst was from 1907 until 1911 British consul general and agent in Egypt. Gorst to Grey, 17 May 1908, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/47. Gorst to Hardinge, 5 Feb., 10 Feb., and 30 April 1910, F.O. 371/895, private. Gorst to Nicolson, 4 Dec. and 25 Dec. 1910, F.O. 371/895, private. Hardinge to Gorst, 4 Feb., 25 Feb., and 18 March 1910, Hardinge MSS., 21. Grey to Bertie, 19 May 1908; Hardinge to Bertie, 3 March 1910; Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/162.

57. Hardinge to Bertie, 30 July 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/180. Two years later Hardinge minuted: 'The French are somewhat difficult in many ways to work with, and like to be paid twice over for any concessions that they make by agreement with us'. Minute by Hardinge on Carnegie to Grey, 1 July 1910, F.O. 371/898.

Neither with regard to Newfoundland and its fisheries nor Egypt was Grey prepared to take as firm a line towards the French as Bertie and his other officials would have liked. His response to French complaints about the treatment of their fishing vessels was more conciliatory than Eyre Crowe had hoped for, and he was reluctant to follow the suggestion made by Gorst in May 1908 that he should give the French a 'rap over the knuckles about their attitude'.⁵⁸ The difficulty, he thought, about complaining to the French over their conduct in Egypt was that they had 'got such a bad bargain in Morocco that one doesn't like to set off one against the other'.

That Bertie had few qualms about exercising strong pressure upon the French in colonial matters was quite evident in his attitude towards the dispute between Britain and France over French arms trafficking in the Persian gulf. The involvement of French firms in the arms trade conducted between the sultanate of Oman and the peoples of east Africa and the north western frontier of India formed the basis of this quarrel. In order to curtail the traffic, the British government endeavoured to secure some modification in the rights enjoyed by the French to import arms at Muscat for re-export across the Persian gulf. Since, however, the arms which also passed through Djibouti practically made that colony self-supporting, any abrogation of French rights was bound to meet with the opposition of the representatives of France's colonial and commercial interests

58. Gorst to Grey, 17 May 1908, op cit. Similarly in February 1910 Hardinge, after a discussion with Grey, urged caution on Gorst in his dealings with the French. Hardinge to Gorst, 4 Feb. 1910, Hardinge MSS., 21.

59. Grey to Gorst, 25 May 1908, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/47.

in parliament. Moreover, the possibility of a negotiated settlement also offered the French a chance to obtain political concessions elsewhere.⁶⁰

The Brussels armaments conference, which was convened in the spring of 1908, provided the Foreign Office with the opportunity to petition the French government on this issue. But the French proved reluctant to agree to any course that might restrict their freedom to exercise their rights at Muscat. Grey therefore instructed Bertie on 11 June to propose to Pichon that separate Anglo-French negotiations should be conducted at Brussels, and to warn him of the 'most unfortunate effect' that would be produced in Britain if France's position became generally known.⁶¹ This Bertie did, and Pichon eventually agreed to the procedure which Grey had proposed. Nevertheless, the efforts of the two governments to make an accord on the arms trade part of a comprehensive settlement of colonial differences between the two countries came to nought.⁶² While the French sought to acquire the cession of the Gambia, they were not prepared to offer Britain the territorial concessions which the British government required.⁶³ When

60. Agnes Picquart, 'Le commerce des armes à Djibouti de 1888-1914', Revue Française d'histoire d'outre-Mer, 58 (1971), 407-432. B.C. Busch, Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 270-280. 'Note sur le régime des armes et des munitions en Afrique'. From Direction des affaires politiques et commerciales, 22 May 1908, N.S.21 (A.A.E.). Bertie to Hardinge, 31 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

61. Busch, p. 282.

62. Aide Memoire enclosed in Bertie to Pichon, 12 June 1908, F.O.146/4041. Bertie to Grey, 12 June 1908, F.O.146/4041, despt. no. 34 (Africa). Bertie to Grey, 14 June 1908, F.O.146/4010, tel. 7. (Africa).

63. Busch, pp. 252-283. Bertie to Grey, 4 Aug. and 31 Oct. 1908, F.O.146/4010, despt. nos. 42 and 50 (Africa). Already in the autumn of 1907 the Quai d'Orsay had been considering the possibility of exchanging their rights in the New Hebrides condominium for the Gambia. But the ministry of colonies was reluctant to consider any other substantial concession to Britain in addition to the surrender of French rights in Muscat. Pichon to P. Cambon, 28 Oct. 1907, N.S.23, despt. no. 931 (A.A.E.); P. Cambon to Pichon, 19 Nov. 1907, N.S.23 (A.A.E.); Pichon to D'Ormesson, 19 June 1908, N.S.23, despt. no. 194 (A.A.E.); Millies-Lacroix to Pichon, 22 Oct. 1908, and 18 Jan. 1909, N.S.21 (A.A.E.)

On 7 October 1909 Bertie, at Grey's instigation, returned to the subject with Pichon, he again indicated that France's attitude would bring people in England to question the value of the entente. Yet Bertie's plea that compensation was not due to France for putting a stop to a trade which 'enabled wild tribes to kill the friends of France', failed to produce from Pichon anything more than a promise to re-examine the matter.⁶⁴

In Bertie's opinion the French were intent upon taking advantage of Britain's troubles on her Indian frontiers 'to squeeze us if they can'. He suggested to the Foreign Office that they should therefore go further in putting pressure on France. On 8 October he enquired of Grey: 'Would it not be a good thing that the "Times" should be moved to publish an article not too harshly worded, but hinting at more later on, on the subject of France being the obstructive Power and the consequent injury to our interests which is difficult to understand considering the Entente &c'? If this failed to make the French more pliable, then Bertie thought a question in the Commons might move them.⁶⁵

The insistence of the French upon 'proper compensation' for a settlement was poorly received by the Foreign Office. Hardinge considered that a moral obligation, which was recognized and accepted by other powers, could hardly be regarded as presenting a basis for compensation.⁶⁶ Indeed, Grey thought that it was more correct to talk of 'blackmail'.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, he and his officials were reluctant to follow Bertie's advice. Montgomery thought that an article in The Times would be ^{too} strong a measure for the moment, and that it would be better to make an appeal to Cambon. 'Public pillorying in the press', he minuted, 'might endanger the entente

64. Bertie to Grey, 7 Oct. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

65. Bertie to Grey, 8 Oct. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie repeated this advice in April 1911. Bertie to Nicolson, 1 April 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

66. Minute by Hardinge on Bertie to Grey, 8 Oct. 1909, F.O.367/172, despt.no.34 (Africa).

67. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 7 Oct. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

which we do not want to do on this question, however important it may be'.⁶⁸

If Bertie's suggestion had been acted upon, Pichon might at least have been placed in a better position to combat the objections of his colleagues to a concession on this subject.⁶⁹ As it was, by December 1909 no real progress had been made towards an Anglo-French accord, and the Brussels conference which reassembled that month could do no more than register the differences between Britain and France. Pichon and Paul Cambon continued to hope that France might secure the Gambia, but during 1910 the Royal Navy began to play a more effective role in dealing with the arms trade, and the Foreign Office was less inclined to listen to French proposals on the issue.⁷⁰ Matters, however, were brought once more to a head when in September 1912 the British authorities at Muscat persuaded the sultan to establish a bonded warehouse in order to restrict the flow of arms through his realm. The French protested that this action was contrary to their treaty rights, and again claimed compensation. Poincaré, who was then foreign minister, even threatened that unless the warehouse scheme were abandoned, France would despatch a warship to the sultanate.⁷¹

68. Minutes by Montgomery and Grey on Bertie to Grey, 8 Oct.1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. C.H.Montgomery was an assistant clerk in the Foreign Office from 1910 until 1916. He was private secretary to Hardinge, and précis writer to Grey.

69. Pichon insisted to Bertie that any French concession on the issue would meet with a very strong opposition in parliament and from the minister of colonies. Bertie to Grey, 30 Oct.1909, F.O.367/172, despt.no.37 (Africa). Bertie to Grey, 30 Oct.1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

70. Busch, pp.282-292. The matter was a subject of conversation between Grey and Pichon when the latter visited London for the funeral of King Edward II, but little progress was made. Moreover, Grey had strong doubts about whether the cession at the Gambia would be acceptable to public sentiment. Grey to Bertie, 19 May 1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176. Grey to Bertie, 6 April 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Hardinge to Nicolson, 22 Dec.1910, Hardinge MSS., 92, Pichon to the Ministry of Colonies, 11 April 1910, N.S.24. (A.A.E.)

71. Busch, pp.292-298. Note pour le ministre, 24 Aug.1912, N.S.24. (A.A.E.) The warship which the French proposed to send to Muscat was the Montcalm. Their intention was that it should call at Muscat with two old field guns for the sultan. Bertie to Grey 21 Oct., 24 Oct. and 14 Nov.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

This forced Grey to consider sending an armoured cruiser to the gulf, and on 4 September he instructed Bertie to inform Poincare, that he trusted that no untoward incident would arise 'as it would not fail to have a most serious effect on the relations of the two countries.'⁷²

Bertie considered the conduct of the French to be 'iniquitous', but, he observed to Nicolson, 'they are almost invariably blackmailers in such matters.'⁷³ Ultimately the British decision to stand firm on the warehouse question, and perhaps Poincare's desire not to harm the entente at a critical juncture in European politics, led the French to abandon their naval threat. In May they indicated their readiness to adhere to the sultan's regulations and to prevent French firms from participating in the trade, in return for the indemnification by Britain of the arms dealers. On this basis a settlement was arranged, and on 14 March 1914 notes were exchanged between the two governments, which confirmed their agreement.⁷⁴

One other colonial issue in his approach to which Bertie differed from Grey was that which related to France and the future of the Congo Free State. The maladministration of King Leopold of the Belgians there had long been a matter of public concern in

72. In fact the Montcalm never arrived at Muscat. Busch, pp.298-

299. Grey to Bertie, 16 Oct.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

73. Bertie to Nicolson, 16 Sept.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174

74. Busch, pp.299-302. But even after Britain and France had managed to reach an accommodation on Muscat, French arms trading in east Africa continued to irritate the British government. Grey told Bertie in June 1914 that he was 'angry with the French government on the subject of the French arms traffic through Jibouti'. Memorandum by Bertie, 27 June 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

Britain.⁷⁵ But even after Grey had succeeded in persuading the Belgian government of the importance of their assuming responsibility for the territory, it was necessary to consider by what means authority should be transferred and reform assured. With this in view, the Foreign Office began in December 1906 to seriously consider the summoning of an international conference.⁷⁶ This was of interest to Bertie both because of his previous experience in the Foreign Office, and because France with her territories in the Congo basin was the power which was least likely to favour such a gathering. What, however, distressed him was the attitude of Grey and his officials in London towards the pre-emptive rights which the French claimed to have on the territories of the free state as the result of an agreement reached with the International Association of the Congo in April 1884 and an accord with Belgium of February 1895.⁷⁷

On 18 January 1907 Grey told Cambon that he would not like to propose a conference without knowing the French government's view as they had 'a special interest in the matter owing to their right of pre-emption'.⁷⁸ This drew from Bertie an immediate protest. Such a right, he declared in a letter to Grey of 23 January, had not been recognized by any power other than Belgium,

75. Britain's attitude towards the Congo free state is dealt with in detail in S.J.S.Cookey, Britain and the Congo Question, 1885-1913 (London, 1968).

76. Ibid., pp.170-189. Grey to Roosevelt, 12 Feb.1907, Grey MSS., F.O.800/110. Grey to Ripon, 11 May 1907, Ripon MSS., (B.M.) Add. 43640.

77. On the origins of the rights claimed by the French government on the Congo see: Jean Stengers, 'King Leopold and Anglo-French Rivalry, 1882-1884' in P.Gifford and Wm.R.Louis, France and Britain in Africa (London, 1971), pp.158-161. J.Ferry to French ministers at Brussels and Lisbon, 28 April 1884, D.D.F.1, v, no.252. The Franco-Belgian convention of 1895 had been arranged at a time when the Belgian government were contemplating the annexation of the free state. It made the French right of pre-emption applicable if Belgium should ever relinquish the territory. This convention was not, however, ratified. Cookey, p.199.

78. Grey to Bertie, 18 Jan.1907, F.O.371/68, despt.no.9 (Africa). Already in an address which he had delivered to the Congo Reform Association on 20 November 1906, Grey had referred to France having a right of preference on the free state. P.Cambon to Pichon, 22 Nov.1906, D.D.F.2, x, no.302.

and Germany, he thought, 'would certainly resist any attempt on the part of France to act on the claim unless in agreement with her'. German opposition to the Anglo-Congolese agreement of 1894, which had aimed at providing Britain with a railway link between Rhodesia and the Nile, and the reversionary claims which they had staked out in their agreement with Britain on the Portuguese colonies, had helped to convince Bertie that they were bent upon extending their territories across central Africa. For this reason he believed that Germany was bound to interfere if the French were at any time to lay claim to the whole of the Congo.⁷⁹ Grey, however, was unimpressed by Bertie's argument. Since Britain did not want the Congo for herself, he reasoned that she should not be sensitive about French pre-emptive rights. 'If exercised', he minuted, 'we might make a few conditions about Freedom of Trade etc., which are not already Treaty obligations of the territory'.⁸⁰ Moreover, in April he informed Cambon that if France 'did not desire that right in its entirety, it might be very easy for her to make a satisfactory deal with Germany, and she would certainly not find that we should be in any way difficult to deal with'.⁸¹ Such advice could hardly have been more alien to Bertie's point of view, and when in the autumn the matter was again raised he lost no time in letting the Foreign Office know his opinion.

In an interview with Cambon on 23 October on the subject of a conference, Grey again acted as if the government had accepted

79. Bertie to Grey, 23 Jan. 1907, F.O.367/68, private. On the Anglo-Congolese agreement of 189 see Wm. R. Louis, Ruanda-Urundi, 1884-1919 (Oxford, 1963), pp. 30-40. R. O. Collins, King Leopold, England and the Upper Nile, 1899-1909, (London, 1968), pp. 36-42. Jacques Willequet, 'Anglo-German Rivalry in Belgian and Portuguese Africa', Gifford and Louis, Britain and Germany in Africa, pp. 246-247.

80. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 23 Jan. 1907, op.cit.

81. Grey to Bertie, 19 April 1907, F.O.371/254, despt. no. 13 (Africa)

France's pre-emptive rights.⁸² After having read Grey's account of this conversation, Bertie fulminated to Tyrrell:

Do H.M. Government intend to give France a free hand to act on her so-called right of pre-emption in regard to the Congo which no previous British Cabinet had ever recognized? The result of such a policy might be to give Germany an opportunity of making with France a bargain which would bring Germany into still further contiguity than now with British interests in Africa.⁸³

But in reply Tyrrell, on Grey's instructions, drew Bertie's attention to a statement by Cambon that before France exercised her right she would first come to terms with Britain and Germany. He also forwarded to Bertie a memorandum by E.A.W. Clarke of the Africa department, which attempted to justify the acceptance by Britain of France's pre-emptive claims.

Clarke asserted that Belgium had enquired of Britain and Germany in 1895 as to whether they had any objections to assurances being made to France with regard to a right of pre-emption, and that both powers had stated that they had no objections. With regard to a possible Franco-German bargain, he maintained that quite apart from the question of whether German contiguity were to be deprecated or not, he could not see 'that on any conceivable theory of cession to Germany, she could be brought into very much greater contiguity with us than was already the case'. He observed that Germany would certainly not touch British possessions in the 'north western corner of the Congo', where perhaps Britain might want some modification of the Bahr-el-Ghazal frontier. Only in the south, if Britain took Katanga, would she have Germany as a neighbour. Nothing, he concluded, could anyway be done without

82. Grey to Bertie, 24 Oct. 1907, F.O. 367/69, despt. no. 53 (Africa).

83. Bertie to Tyrrell, 31 Oct. 1907, F.O. 367/69, private.

a previous understanding between Britain, France, and Germany, and he imagined, the other signatories of the Berlin act. Every opportunity would, he estimated, be given to Britain to look after her interests.⁸⁴

Bertie had not the same faith in the continuity of French foreign policy as Clarke evidently had. Cambon's assurances, he thought, were satisfactory, and would suffice for so long as the French government remained in the same mood of dependence upon England in their relations with Germany. But, he warned Tyrrell on 25 November, it would be 'inadvisable...to give the French to understand, or to let them infer that we are indifferent as to how the territories of the Congo state may be distributed by France and Germany'. Clarke, he considered to be 'splendidly confident' about German claims in the Congo. 'This Rip van Wikel', he added, 'when he wakes up may find Germany to be in possession'.

In a memorandum which he sent with his letter to Tyrrell Bertie also pointed out that the territories of the free state were contiguous with British interests from the Bahr-el-Ghazal to Uganda, and from the northern-most tip of British central Africa down along the northern frontier of Rhodesia. There was no reason he thought, why Germany should not seek to expand her possessions westwards through the Congo to meet her reversionary claims in Angola. Germany, he speculated, might ultimately have a common frontier with the British empire from the Orange river to the southern Sudan. He admitted that Germany might not attempt to do all this, but, he insisted, the essential point was that if Britain began by disclaiming all territorial desires, she would 'leave the cake to be cut up between France and Germany'. The stipulation which Grey proposed to make about freedom of trade, would not in Bertie's view serve any real purpose, for, he

84. Tyrrell to Bertie, 21 Nov. 1907, and enclosed memorandum by E.A.W. Clarke, 4 Nov. 1907, Bertie MSS., A. F.O. 800/160.

observed, wherever the French and Germans held sway, they gave advantages to their own traders.⁸⁵ Grey, however, was far more interested in bringing an end to the present state of affairs in the Congo, than with the possibility of a Franco-German partition. It would, he thought, be very difficult to challenge the terms of the Franco-Belgian treaty which had been laid before the world for twelve years without protest, and he had anyway no desire to assume responsibility for more territory in Africa. In the event of a Franco-German deal on the Congo, he considered that Britain would have to put in her word according to what her interests required.⁸⁶

It was apparent that Grey shared neither Bertie's fears about an extension of German influence in Africa, nor his doubts about giving recognition to French claims on the Congo. Nevertheless, the doubts about French policy which Bertie expressed were not without foundation. Pichon was contemplating a colonial bargain with Belgium, and but for Paul Cambon's opposition might well have gone back on France's previous assurances about participation in a conference.⁸⁷ Moreover, in a memorandum of 5 December 1907 Phillipe Berthelot, then a sous-directeur of the Quai d'Orsay, claimed that since France could in virtue of her rights be 'maitresse de la situation' in the Congo, an arrangement with Britain and Germany would open the door to a comprehensive settlement in west Africa, and might, he speculated, attenuate 'l'action hostile de l'Allemagne en Maroc'.⁸⁸ It was the result of just such an arrangement with Germany that caused Bertie to fear for the future security of Britain's African possessions.

85. Bertie to Tyrrell, 25 Nov. 1907, and enclosed memorandum, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

86. Minute by Grey enclosed in Tyrrell to Bertie, 16 Dec. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

French conduct in Morocco meanwhile gave Bertie's colleagues in London good cause to complain about the working of the entente. Despite Grey's efforts to avoid any action which might lead the French to doubt the value of England's support, they seemed to be all too ready to co-operate with the Germans in economic ventures in Morocco which threatened both to injure British interests and to contravene the Algeiras act. During the summer of 1907 there were discussions between Bülow and Jules Cambon on the possibility of Franco-German economic co-operation in Morocco, and unofficial conversations on this same subject proceeded between the French and German legations at Tangier. But for Bülow's reluctance at this stage to abandon Germany's political interests in Morocco progress might have been made towards an accord between Paris and Berlin.⁸⁹ Neither, however, the affairs of Morocco, nor evidence that the ~~Ge~~ Germans were making a fresh attempt to woo France, appear to have greatly worried Bertie. A report, which he received in March 1908, that Schoen had recently told Schelking, a former Russian diplomat, that it was in France's interest to unite with Germany and renounce her understanding with England, simply confirmed him in his view that the Germans were determined to divide the entente.⁹⁰

According to Schelking's account, Schoen had observed that if in a war with England, Germany were defeated at sea, she would seek compensation in France which would become an Anglo-German battlefield.⁹¹ Similar assertions were made by Wangenheim, the German charge d'affaires at Tangier. He warned Tardieu on 5 July 1908, that Germany would not allow France to remain neutral in the event of a conflict with Britain.⁹² Indeed, fear of the consequences

87. D.D.F.2, xi, nos.202 and 205.

88. For a more detailed discussion of French policy towards the Congo, see Cockey, pp.199-203, D.D.F.2, xi, no.217.

89. R.Poidevin, Les Relations Economiques et Financières entre la France et l'Allemagne (Paris, 1969), pp.413-457. Ubi Supra, Edwards, pp.388-390.

90. Bertie to Grey, 2 April 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

91. Note du Bureau des Communications, 27 March 1908, D.D.F.2, xi, no.317. The prospect of France becoming a German hostage in an Anglo-German war had already been raised in the French and German press in the spring of 1905. J.M.Carrol, French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, 1870-1914. (Durham, N.C. 1951, pp.214-215).

of France being drawn into such a dispute may have encouraged Clemenceau to resume his efforts to persuade the British government to adopt some form of conscription.

Campbell-Bannerman's funeral in April provided Clemenceau with an excuse for visiting England and an opportunity to raise ~~at~~ this subject with Grey, and in the following month at the time of Fallières' visit to London the question was taken up in the French press.⁹³ Then in August, following public statements by Winston Churchill, the president of the Board of Trade, and Lloyd George, the chancellor of the exchequer, which indicated their sympathy for better relations with Germany, Clemenceau returned again to the offensive. During his sojourns at Carlsbad and Marienbad, he urged on first Wickham Steed of The Times, and then the King, the importance of Britain having a 'national army worthy of the name'. He reinforced his argument with a warning to Sir Edward Goschen, the British ambassador at Vienna, on 29 August, that once the French public realized the price which France would probably have to pay for England's friendship 'away goes the Entente, away the men who promoted it, and away go the friendly feelings which are so much advantage to both countries'. These were strong words from a statesman who was generally regarded as an Anglophile.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Bertie seems to have been unruffled

92. Ubi Supra E.W. Edwards, pp.494-495.

93. Pichon gave as a reason for Clemenceau wishing to attend the funeral the fact that he had had 'des relations personnelles d'amitié avec Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman'. Pichon to the chargé d'affaires at London, 29 April 1908, N.S.21, despt.no. 201 (A.A.E). But for Bertie the visit was clearly a political manoeuvre. He recalled that the only occasion on which the two men had met they had quarrelled. General Report on France, 1908, op.cit. Grey to Pallodon, ii, 289-93, Lister to Grey, 26 May and 28 May 1908, F.O.371/455, despt.nos.214 and 217. Lister to Hardinge, F.O.371/455, private.

94. Wickham Steed's account of his interview with Clemenceau was subsequently communicated the Foreign Office and to Asquith. The latter was very annoyed about a reference by Clemenceau to the ignorance of some British public men, and his assumption that Britain ought to maintain a conscript army. Henry Wickham Steed, Through Thirty Years, 1892-1922 (2 vols., London, 1924), i, 283-288. Clemenceau to Pichon, 29 Aug.1908, D.D.F.2, xi, no.434. Goschen to Grey, 29 Aug.1908, B.D., vi, no.100. Asquith to Grey, 7 Sept.1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/100. W.E.Goschen was British ambassador at Vienna from 1905 until 1908 when he transferred to Berlin.

by such talk. On 2 September he warned Pichon that if the French should ever accept an accommodation with Berlin, they would find themselves in Germany's tow. Whenever the French did not do as the Germans desired, they would, Bertie warned Pichon, be threatened with an Anglo-German accord.⁹⁵

Bertie did not, however, feel able to neglect the critics of the entente in France. There was certainly little which could be gained from embarrassing its supporters, and he continued to make every effort to obviate such actions by the British government which might be construed as giving unnecessary offence to the French. Even a proposal from the Portuguese government that British should send a representative to participate in their celebrations to mark the centenary of the Peninsular war was frowned upon by Bertie.

When in August 1908 this idea was first mooted in London, Grey's officials were not unduly worried. Neither Eyre Crowe nor Langley, another of the assistant under-secretaries, believed that the French would take umbrage at Britain's participation, and Grey seems to have been as much concerned with the effects of the celebrations upon the domestic situation in Portugal as with their effects upon France.⁹⁶ But in a letter to Grey of 13 September Bertie took a very different view. He was not anxious about the effect which it would have upon the French government, for Clemenceau assured him that he and his colleagues

95. Bertie to Grey, 3 Sept. 1908, B.D., vii, no. 98.

96. Memorandum by Mallet, 25 Aug. 1908, and minutes by Spicer, Eyre Crowe, Langley and Grey. F.O. 371/510. F. Campbell to Bertie, 31 Aug. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/176. W. L. Langley, was a senior clerk in the Foreign Office from 1902 until 1907 when he was appointed as an assistant under-secretary.

were personally indifferent. What did disturb him was the possibility that the 'Royalist, nationalist and German subventioned French newspapers would make capital out of it'. British representation at the proposed celebrations would not in Bertie's opinion have presented the same objections if it were simply a matter of ^{the} 'burying together of old bones, or the erection of a monument to the fallen of both sides'. However, in the circumstances suggested by Lisbon, he advised Grey to 'choke off the Portuguese'.⁹

It was also with a view to avoiding a political upset in France that Bertie reacted strongly against an idea put to him by Tyrrell on 18 December that Winston Churchill should visit Paris in January 1909 if there were a chance of seeing 'any of the important people'.⁹⁸ Experience had not endeared him to visits from prominent English politicians, and the prospect of receiving in Paris a young radical minister, who was already considered in French political circles to have German inclinations, was far from pleasing. To Tyrrell he protested that Churchill was not regarded in France as 'sound'. He would not be believed, whatever he might say, and, Bertie feared, 'he would do more harm than good'. The only 'really important person' was in Bertie's view Clemenceau, and in the second week in January most other French politicians would, he pointed out, be away from Paris.⁹⁹

In a letter to Grey Bertie explained that people of real importance would not speak their minds to Churchill, and others, whom he might believe to be influential, would simply mislead him. Such a visit, he predicted, would lead to some confusion in France

97. Grey noted on Bertie's letter: 'We must discourage the Portuguese from celebrating'. Bertie to Grey, 13 Sept. 1908, F.O.371/510, private, and minute by Grey.

98. E. Marsh to Montgomery, 15 Dec. 1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/89. Tyrrell to Bertie, 18 Dec. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/165.

99. Bertie to Tyrrell, 18 Dec. and 19 Dec. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/165.

and might set a precedent. He observed that in France the prime minister and Grey were regarded by the French authorities as the exponents of British policy, and if Churchill were to discuss matters relating to this with French ministers, any other minor member of the cabinet might claim to do likewise. After recalling the difficulties which had been caused in the previous year by Campbell-Bannerman's interview with Clemenceau, he advised Grey to 'throw buckets of cold water on the project'. Otherwise, he observed

...you would probably have to explain away all sorts of statements perhaps incorrectly attributed to him, and to seek explanations of statements which he believed to have been made to him but which the interviewed would deny.¹⁰⁰

Both Grey and Tyrrell seem to have been impressed by Bertie's case. At any rate the summary of Grey's views, which Tyrrell gave to Churchill's private secretary, was little more than a paraphrase of the argument put forward by Bertie. Grey deprecated the idea of his colleague seeing any important politicians in France, and in spite of Churchill's vigorous defence of his position, he maintained his stand on this point.¹⁰¹ When in March 1909 Bertie failed to dissuade the British chamber of commerce at Paris from inviting Churchill to their annual dinner, Grey intervened again.¹⁰² He insisted to Churchill that he wanted a 'little breathing time in foreign affairs', and that he could not go to Paris and make a speech without creating a great deal of comment.¹⁰³

100. Bertie to Grey, 19 Dec.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/165.

101. Tyrrell to Marsh, 22 Dec.1908; Churchill to Grey, 24 Dec. 1908; Grey to Churchill, 26 Dec.1908; Grey MSS., F.O.800/89. Montgomery to Grey, 25 Dec.1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/92.

102. When the question of Churchill being invited to Paris for the chamber of commerce dinner was first raised, Bertie wrote to Tyrrell: 'I do not particularly desire to sit and hear here a speech, eloquent no doubt and full of tactful smiles, which may give offence to the tender susceptibilities of the French'. Bertie to Tyrrell, 1 March 1909; Tyrrell to Bertie, 6 March 1909; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186.

103. Grey to Churchill, 22 April 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/89.

Anxious thought Bertie was to 'safeguard the tender susceptibilities of the French', he appears by the summer of 1908 to have harboured few doubts about the stability of the entente.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, not all his colleagues felt as certain as he did about France's future policies. There remained in Hardinge's view the possibility that the French might panic if the Germans again adopted a menacing stance towards them. To Bertie he confessed in July 1908 that he was 'always afraid that if the French become really frightened there may be a general stampede'.¹⁰⁵ But French conduct during the autumn lent little credence to such fears. When in September the intervention of a French officer in an attempt by the German consul at Casablanca to aid the escape of a group of deserters from the foreign legion led to a row between Paris and Berlin, the Quai d'Orsay firmly insisted upon arbitration on its terms.¹⁰⁶ Grey was favourably impressed by the tone, temper, and attitude of the French government, and felt compelled to consider the possibility of a British military intervention.¹⁰⁷ As in 1906 he believed it impossible for the British government to come to a decision beforehand about what course it would take in a war. There was, however, no doubt about where his sympathies lay. If Germany fastened a war on France in connexion with Morocco, she would, he thought, say that France was being attacked because of the entente. In these circumstances, he told the Russian ambassador, 'for us to fold

104. Bertie to Tyrrell, 1 March 1909, op.cit.

105. Hardinge to Bertie, 16 July 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170

106. Barlow, pp.62-67. Grey to Bertie, 3 Nov.1908; Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1908; B.D., vii, nos. 128 and 129.

107. Grey to McKenna, 5 Nov.1908, B.D., vii, no.132. Hardinge to Bertie, 5 Nov.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Grey to Bertie, 12 Nov. and 24 Nov.1908, B.D., vi, nos.135 and 106.

our hands and look on would not be a very respectable part'.¹⁰⁸

The affair of the Casablanca deserters raised once more the prospect of a continental conflict.¹⁰⁹ Yet there still remained scope for political and economic co-operation between France and Germany on specific issues of mutual concern. The significance of this for Anglo-French relations was made particularly clear to Bertie through his involvement during 1907 and 1908 with the problems of the Near and Middle East.

108. Grey to Nicolson, 10 Nov. 1908, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/341. B.D. vii, 129.

109. Hardinge to Nicolson, 11 Nov. 1908, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/341.

Chapter V.

Diplomacy and finance in the Near and Middle East.

Bertie's task as ambassador was by no means confined to handling matters of a strictly political nature. He was during 1907 to become engaged in the promotion of a project which aimed at encouraging British investment and enterprise in Turkey through the collaboration of British and French firms in a financial and commercial consortium. The negotiations connected with this scheme began at a time when, as a result of differences over the implementation of administrative reforms in Macedonia, Anglo-Turkish relations were far from good. But the Young Turk revolution of July 1908 and the dramatic reversal in British fortunes at Constantinople which it portended diminished the interest of the Foreign Office in co-operation with France in financial matters. Bertie was, nevertheless, drawn once more into the politics of the Near East by the diplomatic crisis which developed in the Balkans in the autumn of that year.¹

In a memorandum which he completed on 18 June 1906 Adam Block drew the attention of the Foreign Office to the progressive decline which had taken place in the British share

1. Those parts of this chapter which concern the financial aspects of Anglo-French relations in the Near and Middle East are dealt with in more detail in my article on the subject. Ubi supra K.A. Hamilton, 'An attempt to form an Anglo-French "Industrial Entente"'.
 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 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in capital investment and state finance in the Ottoman empire. He contrasted this with the position which French financiers had maintained as the principal creditors of the Porte, and their association with the agents of German capital in what he termed a 'Franco-German entente in Turkish finance'. The 'prime mover in French financial operations' was, according to Block, the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Although it was by origin an Anglo-French institution, and although it still possessed a London as well as a Paris committee, the majority of the bank's shareholders were French, and it was their representatives who effectively controlled its policy. At Constantinople it had in collaboration with various German interests succeeded in creating a virtual monopoly in Turkish state finance whose methods, Block feared, would drive the Porte towards internal bankruptcy.²

The prospect of Turkey's financial collapse raised the whole question of the political future of the Near and Middle East. Block predicted that in such an event the powers interested would, in defence of their holders of Turkish stock and the railways which they controlled, be obliged to take measures for creating order out of financial chaos. But, he

2. Memorandum by Mr Block respecting Franco-German Economic Penetration enclosed in O'Connor to Grey, 3 July 1906, B.D., v, no.147. On the relative decline in British investment in Turkey see H. Feis, Europe the World's Banker, 1870-1914 (New York, 1930), pp. 318-320. For a survey of the relations between the Ottoman Bank and German financial institutions see R. Poidevin, pp. 267-276.

concluded,

...English Houses...have no interest to speak of to protect in comparison with the French and Germans, who are laying an economic foundation on which they will be able to build a political edifice.

If there were a financial crisis in Turkey then Britain would not have the economic basis with which to justify a political intervention.³

None of this might have warranted Bertie's attention if Grey had not endeavoured to utilize the entente with France in order to further British interests in Turkey. Such a course was initially recommended by Block to Hardinge in October 1906. He suggested that some reform of the Ottoman Bank might thereby be attempted so as to give the London committee more influence in determining the bank's policy. Yet, much as Grey was pleased with Block's advice, the affair of the surplus revenues seemed only to demonstrate that diplomatic pressure upon the French government was insufficient to prevent the representatives of France at Constantinople from acting in sympathy with their German colleagues.⁴ Mallet wrote to Bertie on 18 November 1906 that any financial entente with France in the Near East would at present mean a financial entente with Germany.⁵ In one instance, however, both countries found themselves capable of collaborating to contain the expansion

3. Memorandum by Block, ibid.

4. Block to Hardinge, 20 Oct. 1906, F.O. 371/155, private, and minute by Grey.

5. Mallet to Bertie, 18 Nov. 1906, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/174.

of German interests in Turkey.

Faced in the autumn of 1906 with the prospect of the Constantinople Quays company falling into German hands, the British and French governments gave official encouragement to the purchase of the majority of the company's shares by the Bank of England and a French group headed by the Ottoman Bank. The two banks recognized the rights and interests of their respective governments in matters affecting their national interests, and by an Anglo-French exchange of notes on 28 and 29 January 1907 formal recognition was given to this acquisition.⁶ This gave ^{an} additional fillip to a search for further joint Anglo-French ventures in Turkey. Hardinge, who was more than satisfied at the deal having been clinched, wrote to Bertie on 17 January that he hoped it would be the first step towards a more systematic co-operation in commercial matters in the Near East.⁷ In fact a scheme was already being evolved for promoting co-operation between British and French contractors and financiers in Turkey.

On 6 January Sir Arthur Vere, the agent of Armstrong, Whitworth and company at Constantinople, and Auboyneau called at the British embassy at Paris. As Bertie was absent, Vere

6. H. Llewellyn Smith (The Board of Trade) to F.O., 10 Nov. 1906; Memorandum by Mr Villiers respecting the "Société des Quais, Docks, et entrepôts de Constantinople", 8 Nov. 1906; Edouard de Rothschild to Lord Rothschild, 9 Nov. 1906; P. Cambon to Grey, 27 Nov. 1906; Hardinge to Huth Jackson, 12 Nov. 1906; Grey to P. Cambon, 26 Nov. 1906; F.O. 368/58. Hardinge to Grey, 28 Dec. 1906, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/92. P. Cambon to Pichon, 7 Jan. 1907, N.S. 20, tel., 1 (A.A.E.). Grey to Bertie 28 Jan. and 29 Jan. 1907, F.O. 368/132. 7. Hardinge to Bertie, 17 Jan. 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/180.

informed Lister of his plan for an Anglo-French commercial combination for seeking concessions in the Ottoman empire. It would be composed of a British and a French syndicate, which would seek out and share concessions with each other. The Ottoman Bank was to give its support, and Auboyneau, who had already had discussions with Grey and Hardinge in connexion with the purchase of the Quays company, was only too eager to assure Lister of the desire of the bank to work with England and English capital.⁸

The scheme was attractive to Grey from both a political and an economic point of view. It offered to the Foreign Office the opportunity of replacing Anglo-French rivalry by co-operation, and the chance of extending the influence of Britain, and combatting that of Germany in the Ottoman empire. Thus with their blessing discussions commenced in London and Paris for the formation of the proposed syndicates.⁹ The support of the Ottoman Bank for the scheme soon, however, proved to be more apparent than real.¹⁰ Indeed, the obstructive tactics which it employed during the next three months did much to hinder the progress of the project.

8. The project also had the support of Étienne. Lister to Mallet, 27 Jan. 1907, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/51.

9. Minute by Grey on Lister to Mallet, 27 Jan. 1907, ibid. Hardinge to Bertie, 24 Jan. 1907, Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/185. Hardinge to Bertie, 18 March 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/164. Lister to Hardinge, 23 Feb. 1907, F.O. 371/340, private. Memorandum by A. Wilson Fox (The Board of Trade), 11 Nov. 1907, F.O. 371/350.

10. On 29 January 1907 Auboyneau informed the commercial director of the *Qui d'Orsay* that he foresaw 'des inconvénients à l'entrée officielle de la Banque Ottomane dans des arrangements de cette nature, portant sur les affaires indéterminées'. Note du Département, 'Visite de M. Auboyneau, 29 Jan. 1907, N.S. 360 (A.A.E.).

The trouble was that while co-operation with British capital might enable the Ottoman Bank to surmount those limitations on its conduct which seemed to result from France's political association with Great Britain, it could gain little from the emergence of a consortium over which it could not exercise a preponderant influence. Such efforts as were made by the representatives of the bank at London and Paris to achieve this were far from pleasing to the British government.¹¹

Pichon seems to have preferred to give his personal support to a project put forward by de Verneuil, the syndic of the Société des Agents de Change, for the formation of a wide-based French group. Like Hardinge he favoured the idea of obtaining the co-operation of the Ottoman Bank because of its influence at Constantinople, but he also protested that he was prepared to take a strong line with it. On 17 April he told Bertie that he agreed with de Verneuil that the opposition of the Ottoman Bank could be set aside if the two governments intimated that they meant to carry the matter through whether the bank liked it or not.¹² Similarly Hardinge proposed to Bertie on 30 May that he should hint to Auboyneau or Verneuil that if Britain could not get a French group to join with her, she would have to find a purely English group, or some other combination, to push British commerce and industry alone.¹³

11. Bertie to Vere, 2 March 1907; Hardinge to Bertie, 9 May 1907; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. Bertie to Mallet, 18 April 1907; Bertie to Hardinge, 4 May 1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Block to Hardinge, 2 April 1907; F.O.371/340, private. Vere to Bertie, 2 May 1907, enclosed in Bertie to Hardinge, 2 May 1907; Vere to Hardinge 8 May 1907; F.O.371/350, private. Agreement was however reached between the representatives of British and French enterprise in one sphere of Turkish commerce and investment. Armstrong Whitworth and Co., Vickers and Sons and M.M.Scheider et cie. Agreed on 9 March 1907 to an arrangement which aimed at eliminating unnecessary competition between them. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. to Hardinge, 25 March 1907, F.O.371/348.

12. Bertie to Mallet, 18 April 1907, *ibid.*

13. Hardinge to Bertie, 29 May 1907, tel.; Hardinge to Bertie, 30 May 1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

Bertie, who was kept informed of the discussions at Paris by Vere, endeavoured to press upon Pichon the importance of avoiding delay. His efforts, however, produced no very positive results. Indeed it was apparent that there was a difference of outlook between officials such as Bertie and Hardinge, whose objectives were principally political, and the bankers involved, who quite naturally considered the project in a more pecuniary light. Even Verneuil, a strong exponent of the scheme, suggested to Bertie on 23 May that the Germans should be offered a share in the proposed consortium in order to overcome their opposition at Constantinople. This drew angry retorts from Bertie's colleagues. 'The whole object of forming an Anglo-French combination', observed Mallet, 'would be defeated if we admitted the Germans to a share in it'.¹⁴ Hardinge protested to Bertie that Britain did not want an Anglo-Franco-German combine at all', and that, if 'the French Govt and French houses do not wish the Anglo-French combine to assume a definite form it would be better to say so at once so that we may push our concerns on different lines'.¹⁵

Pichon also deprecated de Verneuil's suggestion. Much as he appreciated the importance of financial considerations involved, he insisted that the Anglo-French project 'was political and must be considered in that light'.¹⁶ Yet, as Bertie was fully aware, the scheme could be regarded as politically advantageous to France. When Pichon seemed to display more than his usual lack of application in dealing with such matters, Bertie began to suspect that he was no longer so keen on the plan as he had once been. Moreover, although Bertie succeeded in persuading Clemenceau to

14. Bertie to Hardinge, 23 May, 1907, F.O.371/350, private, and minutes by Hardinge and Mallet. Hardinge to Bertie, 28 May 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

15. Hardinge to Bertie, 30 May 1907, op.cit.

16. Bertie to Hardinge, 30 May 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

intervene in the affair, by the second week in July there was still no sign of a French syndicate materializing. This, Bertie surmised, might be due to the French government being hesitant about agreeing to another arrangement in opposition to Germany. He feared that opposition to the scheme might be coming from Joseph Caillaux, the minister of finance, and Arsene Henry, the commercial director of the Quai d'Orsay, whom he suspected of acting in collusion with Auboyneau.¹⁷

Bertie's suspicions were not without foundation. Henry had since January been worried both about arousing German opposition, and about the effects of such an accord upon France's interests in Turkey.¹⁸ Even Pichon had written to Paul Cambon on 14 May that he was perturbed lest the project 'ne serait pas de nature à éveiller à Constantinople de préoccupations qui pourraient devenir pour la politique générale une cause des difficultés et des complications'.¹⁹ The extent of these French apprehensions was revealed at a meeting which Bertie arranged between Vere and Henry on 11 July. Vere, who believed that he had succeeded in bringing the London committee of the Ottoman Bank into line by promising them 40% of the business of the British syndicate, explained his proposals for what he now termed an 'Anglo-French Industrial Entente', and begged Henry to take the necessary steps to settle the matter in Paris. But the commercial director told Vere that he disapproved of the formation "with beating of drums and blowing of trumpets" of allied Anglo-French companies, as he was of the opinion that this would

17. Bertie to Hardinge, 5 June, 12 June, 16 June, 17 June, 10 July and 11 July 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Arsene Henry was the director of commercial affairs in the Quai d'Orsay. He subsequently became president of the administrative council of the Ottoman Bank.

18. Note du Département, 'Visite de M. Auboyneau', 29 Jan. 1907, op.cit.

19. Pichon to P. Cambon. 14 May 1907, N.S.360, despt.no.139. (A.A.E.).

cause trouble (with Germany, Vere presumed)...and could only do harm'. In spite of this warning to him, Vere felt that he had succeeded in reassuring Henry of Britain's intentions. Moreover, his optimism seemed not to be unjustified, for on 13 July Pichon informed him that he was instructing Henry to tell Bertie that a French syndicate had been formed, which would have the same support from the Quai d'Orsay as the British group would have from the Foreign Office.²⁰ It was soon evident, however, that Caillaux had opposed Veneuil's scheme, and that the proposed French group was to consist of no more than a slightly enlarged version of the Société Mirabaud, a syndicate which Auboyneau had formed in close association with the Ottoman Bank.

The prospect of the French group being dominated by the Ottoman Bank and other institutions belonging to what Bertie called the 'protestant Germanophile faction', led him to complain again to Clemenceau that the situation was not going to be much improved at Constantinople. This intervention and a subsequent frank discussion on 17 July between Bertie, Clemenceau and de Verneuil, won the premier's support for the latter's proposals. At Clemenceau's request, de Verneuil undertook to form a company within a week. The Ottoman Bank was to be allowed a 30% share, Vere was to be the director general of the combination at Constantinople, and he was to have a French representative as his partner. All appeared to be ready for the formation of the Anglo-French consortium.²¹

20. Bertie to Hardinge, 10 July 1907; Vere to Bertie, 11 July 1907; Bertie to Hardinge, 17 July 1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Vere to Hardinge, 11 July 1907; Bertie to Hardinge, 12 July 1907; F.O.371/350, private.

21. Bertie to Hardinge, 17 July and 19 July 1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

Bertie's achievement in breaking the log jam in the Paris discussions proved to be a purely tactical victory over the Ottoman Bank and its supporters. Indeed, according to a French Official record, which was probably the work of Henry, Clemenceau had agreed that de Verneuil should seek an extension of the Societe Mirabaud, it 'étant bien entendu d'ailleurs que si la situation de la Banque Ottomane n'était pas dominante elle resterait néanmoins spéciale'.²² Moreover, neither Vere, nor the British Foreign Office had reckoned with the opposition of the bank's London committee. Until September 1907 they remained confident that the Ottoman Bank in London would be content with a substantial share in the British syndicate. They were wrong. Having failed to obtain a controlling interest in the French group, the bank seems to have decided to concentrate its attention upon the British syndicate, and from September until the following February the London committee procrastinated over the part which it would play in such a concern.²³

It was now the turn of the French to complain, and on 7 February 1908 the French financiers, Bardac and Gunzbourg, called at the embassy to press for more haste on the part of the Foreign Office. The French government, Gunzbourg told Lister,

22. Even this arrangement was to be subject to three conditions. These were: that everything should be avoided which would give the project a sensational character; that the two groups should have equal representation in the syndicate; and that all measures should be taken to avoid the new consortium seeking objectives which would be in opposition to French political and economic interests. Notes du Département, 19 July and 22 July 1907. N.S.360 (A.A.E.).

23. Bertie to Hardinge, 9 Sept.1907; Hardinge to Bertie, 25 Sept. 1907; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Hardinge, 18 Sept. 1907, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/185. Mallet to Grey, 8 Sept.1907; Hardinge to the manager of the Imperial Ottoman Bank (London), 11 Oct.1907; Grey to Hardinge, 15 Oct.1907; F.O.371/350. Bertie to Hardinge, 18 Sept. and 19 Sept.1907, F.O.371/350, private.

had to a considerable extent been actuated by a desire to meet British wishes in the execution of the scheme which would seem to benefit Britain more than France.²⁴ Such pleas did not, however, cause British officials to view with any satisfaction the announcement by Barry, the manager of the London branch of the Ottoman Bank, on 13 February, of the formation of a British group called the Ottoman Society.²⁵

From the start it was evident that the Ottoman Bank was to be the predominant factor in Barry's group, and Grey admitted as much to Bertie on 24 February. Moreover, the possibility that other British financiers might join the Ottoman Society was of little comfort to those at Paris who had struggled to form the French syndicate.²⁶ Bertie, after hearing the complaints of Gunzbourg and Verneuil, suggested to Mallet that he might go to Somerset House to find if the British group had been registered, and, if so, who its members were. The result would show, he thought, if the syndicate was the 'Ottoman Bank in other clothing'.²⁷

Bertie's fears were proved more than correct. Further investigation revealed that not only had no other British firms joined the bank in the syndicate but that the Ottoman Society had not been registered. Although Barry insisted that this was on the point of being done, a subsequent request to Mallet for Foreign Office approval of the scheme to be notified to the French

24. De Verneuil to Pichon, 2 Dec.1907, N.S.383 (A.A.E.). Bertie to Hardinge, 6 Dec.1907, F.O.371/350, private. Memorandum by Lister, 7 Feb.1908, enclosed in Bertie to Hardinge, 7 Feb.1908, F.O.371/538, private. Draft letter by Mallet to Ottoman Bank (London), Feb.1908, F.O.371/538 (cancelled). Bertie to Hardinge, 8 Feb. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

25. Hardinge to Bertie, 13 Feb.1908, Bertie MSS.,A, F.O.800/180.

26. Hardinge to Barry, 19 Feb.1908, F.O.371/538. Grey to Bertie, 24 Feb.1908, F.O.371/538, despt.no.82.

27. Bertie to Hardinge, 2 April 1908, tel; Bertie to Mallet, 23 April 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

was unsuccessful. Mallet protested that they had not gone to all this trouble to get the Ottoman Bank to turn itself into a company. 'Our whole object', he wrote to Bertie on 24 April, 'was to get some good British firms to work with French Houses and get concessions in competition with the international financial ring of which the O.B. is part'.²⁸ For his part, Bertie envisaged the use of sanctions against the bank. He explained to Verneuil that while the government had no control in London, at Constantinople, the embassy might make matters run unsmoothly for the bank if the London branch were unaccommodating.²⁹ 'The great object', he observed to Mallet, 'being to put an end to the preponderance of the Bank'.³⁰

Meanwhile Barry maintained that the Ottoman Society would be open to other financial and industrial concerns besides the Ottoman Bank. But he insisted to Hardinge that it would be necessary to lay before potential members of the group an agreement between the British and French syndicates.³¹ It was the drafting of such an arrangement, and especially the problem of deciding what should be included in the list of business propositions of which the two groups were to keep each other informed,

28. Mallet to Bertie, 24 April 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. In so far as the question of registration was concerned, Barry was not lying. A subsequent telephone inquiry on 5 May by the commercial department of the Foreign Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies revealed that the Ottoman Society had been registered at Somerset House on 15 April 1908. But no return was available as to the amount of share capital issued, and no list of directors had yet been filed. Record of telephone communication of 5 May 1908 in paper 15726; Hardinge to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies 5 May 1908; F.O.371/538.

29. Bertie to Mallet, 26 April 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

30. According to figures which Verneuil supplied to Bertie the Ottoman Bank in France was effectively to have a 25% share in the capital of the French group. Bertie to Mallet, 5 May 1908, F.O.371/538, private, (2 letters)

31. Mallet to Bertie, 24 April and 1 May 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Hardinge to Barry, 6 May 1908; Barry to Hardinge, 2 June 1908; F.O.371/538.

which further obstructed the formation of the consortium in the spring of 1908.³² From Paris Bertie hinted at the delay which might be caused if the negotiations were allowed to drag on into another summer. 'Holiday and bath time are getting near', he warned Mallet on 13 June.³³ A fortnight later on 29 June Vere expressed fears that if the negotiations were not concluded by 14 July, when the French holidays would officially begin, and when Pichon would be leaving Paris, there would be a further delay of several months.³⁴ Unfortunately for the future of Anglo-French economic co-operation these apprehensions were proved to be correct.

A draft agreement which was finally arranged and approved of by Hardinge at the end of July went a long way towards meeting British wishes. It did not, however, lead to the formation of the consortium. The other prospective participants in the British group had not by then engaged themselves in writing, and there was no definite agreement on exactly which British firms would join it. Sir Ernest Cassel, who the Foreign Office had expected to play a large part in the British group, had already left London, Verneuil was on the point of leaving Paris, and the annual exodus of ministers and officials from the French capital had begun.³⁵ By then, however, the political situation in Turkey had radically altered.

32. Huth Jackson to Hardinge, 10 May 1908, and minutes by Law, Norman and Hardinge; Hardinge to Barry, 18 May and 22 May 1908; Barry to Hardinge, 22 May 1908; Hardinge to Barry (undated); Barry to Hardinge, 2 June 1908, and minutes by Norman and Mallet; Mallet to Barry, 10 June 1908; F.O.371/538. Mallet to Bertie, 27 June 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

33. Bertie to Mallet, 13 June 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

34. Minute by Norman. 29 June 1908, F.O.371/538.

35. Draft contract schedule C, submitted to the F.O. by Vere, 21 July 1908, and minutes by Norman and Hardinge; Hardinge to Barry, 20 July 1908; Norman to Barry, 22 July 1908; Barry to Norman, 24 July 1908; Vere to Norman 24 July; Norman to Grahame, 28 July 1908; Grahame to Norman, 31 July 1908; F.O.371/538. Mallet to Lowther, 5 Aug.1908, F.O.371/547. Sir Ernest Cassel was a British financier of German Jewish extraction.

Since Grey and his officials had attributed the subordinate role occupied by British financiers in Turkey to the methods employed by the Porte, the Young Turk revolution of July 1908 was bound to be of some importance for the future of Anglo-French co-operation there.³⁶ Turkey's new masters appeared to be favourably disposed towards Britain and their reformist aspirations opened up the prospect of improved Anglo-Turkish relations.³⁷ But the full significance of this for the future of Vere's scheme was not to be appreciated by Bertie until that autumn when discussions on it were renewed.

The prospect of the new administration at Constantinople seeking to exercise its authority throughout the Ottoman empire raised the question of the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, since 1878, had been under Austrian occupation. To meet this situation, Aehrenthal, the Austrian foreign minister, decided upon the annexation of the provinces. Even before the Young Turk revolution Izvolsky had suggested this to Aehrenthal as part of a bargain whereby the straits between the Black sea and the Mediterranean might be opened to Russian warships. But this initiative misfired. Though at a meeting at Buchlau on 15 and 16 September the two foreign ministers reached a verbal agreement, Aehrenthal seems to have avoided making the fulfillment of the Austrian plans dependent upon the opening of the straits.

36. Hardinge informed Block in the spring of 1908 that he thought the situation in Turkey to be fairly hopeless from the point of view of British finance. He thought, however, that it might improve with the death of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. Hardinge to Block, 19 May, and 2 June 1908, Hardinge MSS., 13.

37. M.B.Cooper, 'British Policy in the Balkans, 1908-1909', Historical Journal, vii (1964), 263. Block to Hardinge 25 July 1908, Hardinge MSS., 11. Hardinge to Block, 31 July 1908, Hardinge MSS., 13.

While Izvolsky was still seeking the consent of the other great powers, Aehrenthal made up his mind to proceed, and on 3 October, before Izvolsky had given any information on the subject to his French ally, Khevenhüller, the Austrian ambassador at Paris, informed Fallières and Pichon of his government's intentions. According to the French account, he also said that Austria's action would be preceded by a Bulgarian declaration of independence.³⁸

Bertie was informed by Louis of Khevenhüller's communication within a few hours of it having been made, and later that day Pichon indicated to him that Aehrenthal had the concurrence of the Russian, German, and Italian governments.³⁹ As an ambassador accredited to a country with substantial interests in the Near East and an alliance with Russia, Bertie could have been expected to have interested himself in the ensuing troubles. Yet he was also personally involved in the affair by being one of the first representatives of Britain and France to meet with Izvolsky in the aftermath of the Austrian coup de main. This resulted from the fact that when Izvolsky, who was already on his way to Paris, arrived there on Sunday 4 October he found that Pichon was away shooting. Bertie, however, had been compelled by the Austrian move to abandon the leave which he had been planning to take in England, and was thus able to receive Izvolsky at the embassy. There the Russian foreign minister tried to justify his policies and actions.

38. F.R.Bridge, From Sadowa to Sarajevo. The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary. 1866-1914 (London, 1972), pp.300-305. Bertie to Grey, 4 Oct.1908, B.D., V, no.294. Bertie to Hardinge, 7 Oct.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Bertie to Hardinge, 29 Oct.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

Alois. Baron Lexa von Aehrenthal was foreign minister of Austria-Hungary from 1906 until 1912.

39. Bertie had previously arranged to meet Louis at the Quai d'Orsay on the morning of 3 October in order to press the French government to make representations at Sofia deprecating a possible Bulgarian declaration of independence. Bertie to Grey, 3 Oct.1908, B.D., V, nos.281 and 285. Francis Joseph to Fallières, 29 Sept.1908, D.D.F.2, xi, no.474.

According to Izvolsky, Aehrenthal had broached the subject of the annexations but had not said that such a decision was definitive, or that it would be acted upon at an early date. He insisted that he had warned Aehrenthal that such a course would be contrary to the treaty of Berlin, and that Russia would therefore require a change in the regime of the straits in a sense favourable to the riverain states of the Black sea. Russia, Izvolsky observed, would support Bulgarian independence, but he denied having mentioned this at Buchlau.

Bertie was no more impressed by this conversation with Izvolsky than he had been by the meeting which he had had with him two years before. Neither his recent conduct, nor his attempt to explain it gave Bertie any reason to modify his suspicions about the integrity of the Russian foreign minister. After the interview, he wrote to Grey: 'I have the impression, I may say the conviction that he did not tell me the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. No doubt with this in mind, he persuaded Izvolsky to commit his statement to paper in the form of a memorandum. Unconvinced of the innocence of any of the parties involved, Bertie believed that Germany had promised Austria moral support for her annexation of Bosnia, if she squared first with Italy and Russia. He thought that Izvolsky had probably obtained assurances from Vienna and Rome on the subject of the straits, and had hoped that during his visits to Paris and London, he might prepare the ground for the acquiescence of Britain and France. Yet, while he and Aehrenthal might have discussed the annexation in detail, Bertie suspected that no mention had been made of the timing of the move, and Izvolsky had been 'mistaken and deceived' in thinking that the Austrians would not act without consulting the Russian government. In the event

Aehrenthal had reached an agreement with the Bulgarians to secure their independence, but had wanted them 'to be beholden to her and not to Austria'.⁴⁰

The immediate task which faced Bertie was that of dealing with the French reaction to the Austrian move. He was distinctly unenthusiastic about Clemenceau's suggestion that a conference should be summoned. Without a preliminary agreement between the majority of the powers, Bertie thought that such a gathering would be liable to end in discord, and he feared that if Austria had the concurrence of the other powers, Britain and France would find themselves in a minority and possibly in disagreement with Russia.⁴¹ Nevertheless, this argument carried little weight with the French ministers. Pichon told Bertie on 5 October that Izvolsky favoured a conference and was ready to try to reach a preliminary understanding with Britain, France, and Italy on the attitude to be assumed by them. In Pichon's view Austria would stand as the party accused with Germany as her 'brilliant second'.⁴²

From Pichon's statement Bertie inferred that Izvolsky was trying to 'drag along the French Government and rush us'. The French, he thought, were so afraid of losing their ally that they would accept the Russian version of the transaction.⁴³

40. Bertie to Grey, 4 Oct. 1908, and enclosed memorandum, B.D., V, nos. 293 and 294. Bertie to Tyrrell, 5 Oct. 1908, tel; Grey to Bertie, 5 Oct. 1908, tel; Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie to Hardinge, 4 Oct. and 7 Oct. 1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Bertie subsequently learned from Clemenceau that Izvolsky had been sounded some while ago by the Bulgarian government about the possibility of their obtaining Russian support for a declaration of independence. Bertie to Hardinge, 12 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

41. Bertie to Grey, 4 Oct. 1908, B.D., V, No. 294.

42. Bertie to Grey, 5 Oct. 1908, B.D., V, nos. 297 and 304.

43. Bertie to Hardinge, 7 Oct. 1908, op.cit. According to information which Goschen received at Berlin, and which was confirmed by Jules Cambon, Clemenceau was 'rather rude' to Izvolsky during his stay in Paris, and the Russian foreign minister was 'very sore about it'. Goschen to Hardinge, 2 April 1909, Hardinge MSS., 18.

The attitude of Grey and Hardinge did not differ substantially from that assumed by Bertie. They were agreed that before any conference, there would first have to be a preliminary arrangement between the powers that Turkey should not be required to make further concessions, and that nothing should be done to endanger the new administration at Constantinople.⁴⁴ When, however, on 6 October Clemenceau and Pichon warned Bertie of Izvolsky's intention of proposing a conference, Grey was compelled to act with some haste. That afternoon he telegraphed to Bertie to ask if the French could not induce the Russians to postpone such a proposal.⁴⁵ The suggestion did not please Clemenceau, who protested that if a conference did not meet without delay a war would break out. Bertie, however, succeeded in overcoming this opposition, and finally won French support for Grey's idea.⁴⁶

Bertie's diplomatic achievements won him the felicitations of his colleagues in London. Tyrrell, who 'chuckled' at Bertie's account of his 'cross-examination of the vain old fox as to what passed with Aehrenthal', also congratulated Bertie on the result of his conversation with Clemenceau. He wrote to him on 8 October 'your handling of him (Clemenceau) was admirable and I am sure Sir Edward will think so too'.⁴⁷ On the 12th Hardinge expressed the Foreign Office's pleasure at the information which Bertie had been sending to them, and the manner in which he had

44. Grey to Asquith, 5 Oct. 1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/100. Hardinge to Bertie, 5 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Grey to Nicolson, 5 Oct. 1908; Minutes by Hardinge and Grey; Grey to Bertie, 5 Oct. and 6 Oct. 1908; B.D., v, nos. 301, 303, 306, 311 and 321.

45. Grey to Bertie, 6 Oct. 1908, B.D., v, no. 314.

46. Bertie to Grey, 7 Oct. 1908, and enclosed aide mémoire; Bertie to Grey, 8 Oct. 1908; B.D., v, nos. 333 and 335.

47. Tyrrell to Bertie, 8 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

dealt with Izvolsky, Clemenceau, and Pichon. He commented:

It was very clever of you to have got Isvolsky to write down his views so fully. We have been congratulating ourselves that you were still there and had not gone away on leave.⁴⁸

Pleased with such praise, Bertie thanked Tyrrell for his approval. It had been 'well worth a mass', and he appreciated it more.⁴⁹

Bertie was, however, anything but happy about Grey's apparent willingness to acquiesce in Izvolsky's demands with regard to the straits. While the Russian foreign minister was prepared to accept the exclusion of this subject from any international conference, he made it clear to Grey, during a visit to London, that he intended to raise the issue with the Porte. He pressed Grey not to oppose Russia, and, if possible, to support her claims for the Black Sea powers to have the exclusive right of passage for their warships through the straits. Without such compensation, he pointed out, that both his own position in Russia and the Anglo-Russian understanding would be in danger.

Grey was not personally worried about the opening of the straits to Russia, and Hardinge and Nicolson sympathised with Izvolsky's cause.⁵⁰ Indeed, since 1896 it had been a settled principle of British naval policy that the British fleet would not enter the straits unless in alliance with Turkey, and that therefore the containment of Russia in the Black sea could no longer be regarded as strategically feasible.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Grey and his officials had to reckon with opposition within the cabinet and amongst the public at large towards giving Russia a free hand with

48. Hardinge to Bertie, 12 Oct.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

49. Bertie to Tyrrell, 12 Oct.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

50. Grey of Fallodon, 1, 178-180. Hardinge to Nicolson, 13 Oct. 1908, B.D., v, no.372.

51. D.N.I.Memorandum on Naval Policy, 28 Oct.1906, printed in A.J.Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power: a history of British naval policy in the pre-dreadnought era, 1880-1905, (London 1964), appendix 4.

regard to the straits.⁵²

Bertie himself made much of the likely public reaction to such a concession, which he believed could be damaging to Britain's international standing and prestige. For him the strategic assumptions of the Admiralty counted for little. After a remark made to him by the Russian ambassador in Paris on 12 October about the importance of Russia being able to maintain her fleet in the Black sea, Bertie appealed to Tyrrell:

Are we going to give away the Straits? What will the public think and perhaps say, if and when they learn that non-opposition to the ambitions of Russia in the matter of the Straits was part of the price but not declared for the Anglo-Russian understanding? If Russia is to be allowed to go in and out of the Mediterranean through the Straits to her unapproachable haven, shall we not look foolish?

If there were to be changes in the régime of the straits then Bertie considered that the Black sea should be open to the ships of all nations with limits upon the number passing through the straits at any one moment.⁵³

Bertie need not have worried. On 12 October Grey and Asquith failed to persuade the cabinet to agree to Izvolsky's request.⁵⁴ A second Russian proposal that in the event of Russia being involved in a war, Turkey should give equal rights to other belligerents did contain an element of reciprocity, and was accepted by the cabinet on the 14th.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Grey's policy was still limited by the susceptibilities of the Young

52. Ubi supra, M.B.Cooper, 268-269, Grey to Nicolson, 12 Oct.1908, B.D., v, no.358. Hardinge to Bertie, 12 Oct.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

53. Bertie to Tyrrell, 12 Oct.1908, op.cit.

54. Grey to Nicolson, 12 Oct.1908; Hardinge to Nicolson, 13 Oct. 1908; B.D., v, nos.364 and 372.

55. Asquith to Edward VII, 14 Oct.1908, Asquith MSS., 5. When the cabinet met again on 17 October it was resolved that Izvolsky should be informed that the moment was 'highly inopportune' to raise the question of the straits, and that British public opinion would not support any government which 'for no consideration to her abandoned what has always been regarded as a reliable Treaty right'. Asquith to Edward VII, 17 Oct.1908, Asquith MSS., 5. Grey to Nicolson, 13 Oct. and 14 Oct. 1908; Hardinge to Nicolson, 13 Octo 1908; Memorandum by Grey, 14 Oct.1908; B.D., v, nos.371, 378, 379, 372 and 377.

Turks, and in a private letter of 15 October he would go no further than to promise Izvolsky that at a 'favourable time' he would support Russia's view at Constantinople.⁵⁶

The crisis in the Near East also drew Bertie's attention to the problem of Crete. Since 1897 the island had been autonomous of Turkey and under the protection and military occupation of Britain, France, Italy, and Russia, who were pledged to uphold the suzerainty of the sultan there.⁵⁷ The aspirations, however, of Crete's christian population for union with Greece, and the evident lack of enthusiasm displayed by the protecting powers for maintaining their occupation made the preservation of the existing order even less tenable. In May 1908 the four powers agreed to begin their withdrawal on 28 July, and to complete it within a year. This still left open the question of what they should do if the Cretans were to seek to alter their relationship with Turkey.⁵⁸

In the aftermath of the Young Turk revolution Grey's policy towards Crete was conditioned by his desire to retain the goodwill of the new rulers at Constantinople. He sought to exclude the issue from the agenda of the projected conference, and when on 6 October the Cretan authorities declared the island's union with Greece, he despatched a naval squadron to the eastern Mediterranean.⁵⁹ Through the British consul at Canea, he warned the Cretans that Britain could neither allow nor admit their union with Greece without the consent of the protecting powers.⁶⁰

56. Grey to Izvolsky, 15 Oct. 1908, B.D., v, no. 387.

57. Douglas Dakin, The Unification of Greece, 1770-1923 (London 1972), pp. 149-154. E. Driault and M. Lheritier, Histoire Diplomatique de la Grece de 1821 à nos jours (5 vols., Paris, 1926), iv, 301-469.

58. Dakin, pp. 170-173. But while Grey accepted that Crete would eventually be united with Greece he insisted that union 'must come decently and in order, and in such a way as not to constitute an inexcusable breach of our promise to the Turkish Government'. Grey to Howard, 3 April 1906, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/108.

59. Driault and Lheritier, v, 21.

60. Ubi Supra, M.B. Cooper, 267. Grey subsequently informed Bertie 'if we hadn't held up the Cretan question for the moment Turkey would have thought us no better than a fraud and Greece and Crete must wait a little-not very long probably-for the convenience of their betters'. Grey to Bertie, 29 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/172.

At Paris Bertie tried with little success to ensure the co-operation of the French government on this issue. He had to reckon with both the philhellenic sentiments of the president of the council, and the benefits which France derived from Greek orders for French armaments.⁶¹ When on 7 October Pichon explained to Bertie that the Russian government would be prepared to agree that apart from the actions of Bulgaria and Austria there should be no diminution of Ottoman territory, Clemenceau protested that he must make a reservation with regard to Crete. On this occasion Bertie found an ally in Pichon, and faced with the objections of both the British ambassador and his own foreign minister, Clemenceau waived his point.⁶² Bertie was not, however, for long able to rely upon Pichon, who soon proved reluctant to take up any prominent stand in this affair.⁶³

Pichon objected to both Grey's proposal that Britain and France should encourage Greece to negotiate directly with the Porte, and his suggestion that there should be no reduction in the foreign contingents on the island whilst the illegal situation continued.⁶⁴ On 21 October he intimated to Bertie that ^{the} French government were opposed to any manifestation at the present moment, which could be regarded as anti-Greek. Bertie responded with a predictable warning to Pichon about the advantages which Germany and her ally might secure from such a situation. The Austrians and the Germans, he contended, were insinuating at Constantinople that the Turks would gain more from leaning on them than by listening to the counsels of the entente powers. For Britain and France not to take

61. Grey to Wyldbore-Smith, 8 Oct. 1908, F.O.371/444, tel.26.

62. Bertie to Grey, 9 Oct. 1908, F.O.371/444, tel.62. Bertie to Grey 10 Oct. 1908, F.O.371/444, despt.no.396. Bertie to Grey, 31 Oct. 1908, Bertie to Grey, 7 March 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

63. Bertie to Grey, 7 Oct. 1908, B.D., v, 333.

64. Bertie to Grey, 10 Oct. 1908, op.cit.

65. Grey to Bertie, 14 Oct. 1908, F.O.371/444, despt.no.202. The Greek minister at Paris informed Bertie on 17 October that the Greek government did not desire direct negotiations with the Porte because Turkish procrastination would preclude a successful outcome. Bertie to Grey, 17 Oct. 1908, F.O.371/444, tel.77. Bertie to Grey, 21 Oct. 1908, F.O.371/444, despt.no.417.

precautions to prevent Crete's union with Greece would, he argued, be to play into the hands of the enemies of reform. Pichon, however was not impressed. Confident that the Porte would not be so short-sighted as to follow German advice, he assured Bertie that Germany would not succeed in re-establishing her influence at Constantinople if Britain and France supported the Turks in financial matters.⁶⁶

Pichon offered to Bertie two possible solutions to the Cretan question, which he believed might satisfy Greek and Turkish aspirations. The first, which he put to him on 13 October, was that Greece should compensate the Turks for the loss of Crete by ceding to them certain territories in Epirus. Yet the suggestion, which related to the frontier changes of 1881, was vague and confusing and received an unenthusiastic response in the Foreign Office.⁶⁷ His second proposal proved no more acceptable. At the close of his interview with Bertie on 21 October Pichon, speaking 'non pas ministre, mais comme ami', remarked that if England wished to 'counteract the intrigues of Germany at Constantinople, to show her disinterestness, and to well-establish her influence in Turkey, let her give back to the Sultan Cyprus'. At first Bertie attributed this idea to Clemenceau and the Greek king, but three days later he learned from Pichon that it had originated with Izvolsky. He was not surprised. Izvolsky, Bertie suggested, was using Pichon to do what he did not like to do himself.⁶⁸

66. Ibid.

67. Bertie to Hardinge, 13 Oct. 1908; Hardinge to Bertie, 16 Oct. 1908; Bertie to Hardinge, 18 Oct. 1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Hardinge to Bertie, 29 Oct. 1908; Bertie to Hardinge, 31 Oct. 1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

68. Bertie to Grey, 21 Oct. 1908, op.cit. Bertie to Hardinge, 26 Oct. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

In London both Hardinge and Grey were agreed that Cyprus was of no further use to Britain. Grey admitted that they would be better off without the island and considered that the convention governing it was an 'anachronism and an encumbrance'. Since, however, three quarters of its population were Greek, its return to Turkey would only create trouble for the Porte. 'For these reasons', Grey observed to Bertie, "l'affaire ne marchera" or as we say "this cock won't fight".⁶⁹

Grey was not, however, irreconcilably opposed to the idea of seeking some fresh arrangement with the Porte on Crete. On 20 November he informed Bertie by telegram that the British government proposed to express the hope to the Turks that as soon as the conference had met, they would 'lose no time in communicating to the Protecting Powers their views as to the solution of the Cretan question'.⁷⁰ Unfortunately for Bertie, both Pichon and Clemenceau were busy entertaining the Swedish Royal family, and he was unable to personally communicate Grey's views to them until 23 November. By then Clemenceau had already learnt from Rome of Grey's proposals. Moreover, Tittoni, the Italian foreign minister, who had recently received the Greek king, was now of the opinion that the negotiations to solve the question should take place between the protecting powers and the Turks 'prior to and independent of the Conference'. In this respect Tittoni seems to have succeeded in encouraging Clemenceau to take a stand in favour of an early settlement. At any rate, when on the 23rd Bertie attended a dinner at the Elysee palace, he was forewarned by Pichon that Clemenceau had been 'got at again by the King of Greece' through Tittoni, and had returned

69. Hardinge to Nicolson, 28 Oct.1908, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/341. Grey to Bertie, 29 Oct.1908; Hardinge to Bertie, 29 Oct.1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

70. Grey to Bertie, 20 Nov.1908, B.D., v, no.456.

to his philhellenic views. As a result Bertie came into direct confrontation with the French premier.

Clemenceau told Bertie that he entirely concurred in Tittoni's view that the matter should be settled without delay, and he described as 'extraordinary' a communication made by the British ambassador at Rome to the Italian foreign minister. This had been based upon the same instructions as those which Grey had sent to Paris on the 20th, but Bertie was quite unaware of what Egerton had said, and Clemenceau refused to enlighten him. Indeed, when Bertie ridiculed his view that the British government were harbouring some arrière pensée, he suggested that this had been held back from the ambassador's knowledge. The British government, he claimed, were more Turkish than the Turks themselves.⁷¹

What, according to Bertie, Clemenceau wanted, was that the protecting powers should themselves settle the fate of Crete, press their solution on the Porte, and submit it to a conference for confirmation. 'France', he impressed on Bertie, 'was not prepared to risk losing her influence in Greece'. Bertie was no less uncompromising, and probably regarded the threat posed by the possibility of the Germans regaining their position of influence at Constantinople as more important than the loss by the French of their's at Athens. In his customary forthright manner he insisted to Clemenceau that Britain did not intend to lose her influence at Constantinople to please the Greeks and the Cretans, and 'if he adhered to his present attitude it would mean a separation of France and England in the matter of Crete, for we could not give ~~way~~'. This brought the discussion to an abrupt close.

71. Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172, Bertie to Grey, 25 Nov.1908, F.O.371/445, despt.no.480 A. Tomasso Tittoni was Italian foreign minister during the years 1903-1905 and 1906-1909. He was Italy's ambassador at Paris from 1910 until 1917. E.H.Egerton was British ambassador at Rome from 1905 until 1908.

Though, according to Bertie's account, Clemenceau had by then calmed down, the premier left the dinner, shirked the représentation-théâtrale, and retired to bed.⁷²

In Bertie's opinion, Clemenceau hoped that by using Italian support to return to the reservations which he had made earlier Crete could be excepted from the provision that no territorial compensation should be demanded from Turkey. Nevertheless, Bertie did not take Clemenceau's language too seriously, and he advised Grey not to pay any attention to Clemenceau's ebullition of temper as he was very excitable by nature, and had had an attack of 'remittent Philhellenism'. 'I would', Bertie concluded, 'take no notice of it, and treat it as not having been reported to you'.⁷³ Evidently he hoped that a night's rest would dissipate Clemenceau's suspicions, and as he wrote to the foreign minister, Pichon would be able to tell him 'que la France marchera d'accord avec l'Angleterre'.⁷⁴

Grey was again pleased with Bertie's conduct at Paris. 'Sir F. Bertie', he minuted, 'upheld our view excellently'.⁷⁵ There was, however, no radical change in French policy, and despite Bertie's efforts to discourage such a proposal, Pichon persisted in pressing for Britain's agreement to a plan whereby the protecting powers should try to reach an understanding with the Porte which would be submitted to a conference.⁷⁶ Convinced that it was the 'height of folly' to throw away British influence at Constantinople for the sake of the goodwill of Greece, which could easily be won in the future, Grey urged Bertie to press this point on Clemenceau.⁷⁷

72. Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

73. Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov. 1908; Bertie to Grey, 25 Nov. 1908; op.cit.

74. Bertie to Pichon, 24 Nov. 1908, F.O.146/2043.

75. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 25 Nov. 1908, op.cit.

76. Grahame to Grey, 27 Nov. 1908, F.O.371/445, tel.102.

P. Cambon to Grey, 3 Dec. 1908, F.O.371/445.

77. Grey to Bertie, 7 Dec. 1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

On 4 December he telegraphed to Bertie that if Clemenceau were a card player, he might suggest to him that 'it is a bad policy to make small tricks, of which you can be sure at any time at a moment when it may mean losing all the other tricks in the game'.⁷⁸ Bertie was not pleased with the metaphor. He did not know whether Clemenceau was a card player, but admitted that he himself was not, and that 'never having taken a hand at whist or bridge, I should be in helpless confusion if I attempted to argue with him about tricks in the game as regard to Crete and the Near East'. Moreover, Bertie thought that there was little point in continuing to discuss this matter with Clemenceau.⁷⁹

In an interview with one of the officials of the embassy on 27 November Pichon insisted that the French were not going to sacrifice their 'Greek clientele'.⁸⁰ This Bertie assumed to refer to France's commercial interests in Greece. Finding Clemenceau 'quite unreasonable and incorrigible' on Crete, he advised Grey:

Let him gain credit with the Greek government for anxiety to do what they and their King desire, prevented only by English incomprehensible opposition. He will get his reward, viz. orders for ships, and arms, to pay for which Greece would have to go to the Paris Money Market.⁸¹

Pichon assured Bertie on 3 December that the 'clientele' to whom he had referred were not only commercial, but political.⁸²

78. Grey to Bertie, 4 Dec.1908, tel., Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

79. Bertie to Grey, 5 Dec.1908, 10 Jan. and 14 Jan.1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172. Grey agreed with Bertie's decision. He did, however, suggest the possible use of another metaphor which may have been more in keeping with Bertie's interests. 'I would', Grey wrote 'say it is folly deliberately to go for a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb trout and in catching it put a 3 lb-der off the feed when both are on the rise together'. Grey to Bertie, 7 Dec.1908; Tyrrell to Bertie 8 Dec.1908, tel; Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

80. Grahame to Grey, 27 Nov.1908, F.O.371/445, tel.102.

81. Bertie to Grey, 5 Dec.1908, op.cit.

82. Bertie to Grey, 3 Dec.1908, F.O.371/445, tel.105. In 1907 the French government had in response to a Greek plea for assistance sent Admiral Fournier to Athens to advise the Greeks on the re-organization of their navy. Dakin, pp.173-175.

Nevertheless, there was some truth in Bertie's assessment of the situation. On 10 January 1909 Pichon informed Bertie that Clemenceau was less anxious to take up the matter, and that he himself was ready to acquiesce in the postponement of any decision on Crete.⁸³ Amongst the factors which may have brought about this modification in French thinking was their concern for their economic interests in Turkey. Whereas in October Constans had felt confident that the Young Turks would be prepared to accept the loss of Crete as one of the inevitable consequences of the faults of the Hamidian regime, by Christmas he was reporting to Paris upon the mounting opposition in Turkey to such a concession. Indeed he had learned that Sharif Pasha had recently warned a French journalist that France's pro-Greek policies might lead to the extension of the Turkish trade boycott to French goods.⁸⁴ There was also the danger that Grey's firm stand on Crete might lead to the isolation of France. As Louis pointed out in a minute of 2 January, if Britain were not prepared to withdraw her forces from Crete, then Italy and Russia might also be reluctant to do so.⁸⁵

The French attitude towards a withdrawal from Crete continued to vary during the spring of 1909. On 24 May Paul Cambon told Grey that his government agreed with the British proposition that after July the Ottoman flag should be maintained on Suda island outside the harbour at Canea under the guardianship of one of the

83. Bertie to Grey, 10 Jan.1909, F.O.371/647, tel.5. Bertie to Grey, 10 Jan.1909, F.O.371/647, despt.no.18. Bertie to Grey, 10 Jan.1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

84. Bertie to Hardinge, 22 Oct.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172. Constans to Pichon, 24 Dec.1908, D.D.F.2. no.592.

General Sharif Pasha was a prominent member of the Committee of Union and Progress.

85. Constans to Pichon, 24 Dec.1908, ibid. Note du Directeur Politique, 2 Jan.1909; Pichon to Constans, 6 Jan.1909; D.D.F.2., nos.594 and 597. Delcassé suggested to Bertie that Clemenceau's change of front on the issue of Crete was due to parliamentary pressure. Bertie to Grey, 29 Jan.1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/165.

protecting powers.⁸⁶ Some three days later Pichon informed Bertie that Clemenceau no longer favoured ending the occupation before an agreement had been reached with the Porte.⁸⁷ This change of front may, as Bertie surmised, have been due to German meddling in the affair. According to the Turkish ambassador at Paris, the German emperor had not only promised to support an Italian démarche favouring the Greek annexation of Crete, but had also during his stay on Corfu given formal assurances to the king of Greece. From this Bertie concluded that Clemenceau was afraid lest the union of Crete with Greece under German auspices should mean 'the appearance of Germany in the Mediterranean by some arrangement with Greece'.⁸⁸

When an Italian démarche failed to emerge Pichon beat a speedy retreat from his statement of the 27th. He told Bertie on 4 June that his personal opinion was that the troops had better leave.⁸⁹ Clemenceau also had doubts about maintaining a stationaire in Suda bay to guard the Ottoman flag. Indeed, the withdrawal of the forces of the protecting powers at the end of July was followed by a bitter dispute over the flying of flags which almost brought Greece and Turkey to war. Only after the landing of a fresh contingent of protecting forces did the crisis recede.⁹⁰

86. Grey to Bertie, 24 May, 1909, F.O.371/648, despt.no. 234. In view of the threat of war between Greece and Turkey, Hardinge considered the protection of the flag on Suda island to be the only possible solution. Hardinge to Lowther, 28 May, 1909, Lowther MSS., F.O.800/193A.

87. Bertie to Grey, 27 May 1909, F.O.371/648, despt.no.208.

88. Bertie to Grey, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Pichon to Constans, 25 May 1909; Pichon to P.Cambon, 8 June 1909; D.D.F.2, xii, nos. 201 and 211.

89. Bertie to Grey, 4 June 1909, F.O.371/648, despt.no.220.

90. Peel to Grey, 4 Aug.1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/110. Grey to Bertie, 7 Aug.1909, F.O.371/650, despt.no.493. Hardinge to Lowther, 9 Aug.1909, Lowther MSS., F.O. 800/193 A, Driault and Lhéritier, v, 29-32.

The revival of British political influence at Constantinople, Grey's defence of which had been in large part responsible for the Anglo-French differences over Crete, also had an adverse effect upon the pursuit of an 'industrial entente'. Initially, Grey and those in the Foreign Office who were concerned with the matter hoped that the collapse of the old regime would lead to an expansion of British investment in Turkey, which would provide the basis for a more satisfactory collaboration between British and French interests there. In particular they hoped to strengthen British influence in the Ottoman Bank in order to make it an instrument of, rather than an obstacle to, effective Anglo-French co-operation.⁹¹ For their part both the French government and French bankers seemed to welcome any sign of a renewal of British investment in the Ottoman empire.⁹² But the apparent improvement in the political situation at Constantinople was not matched by any corresponding increase in the confidence of British firms in Turkish finance. Despite the representations of the Foreign Office neither Rothschilds nor Barings were ready to launch a Turkish loan on the London market in September 1908.⁹³

In November the Foreign Office was given a fresh opportunity to encourage British investment in the Near East as a result of the efforts of the Young Turks to establish a new state bank to facilitate commerce and industry in the empire.

91. Grey to Lowther, 23 Aug.1908, B.D., v, no.28. Hardinge to Block, 31 July and 21 Sept.1908, Hardinge MSS., 13. Hardinge to Bertie, 30 July 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Hardinge to Grey, 25 Sept.1908, F.O.371/549. Chirol to Tyrrell, 21 Nov.1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/106.

92. Bertie to Grey, 10 Sept.1908, F.O.371/549, despt.nos.341 and 343.

93. But in November 1908 the Foreign Office did succeed in persuading Cassel and Stern Bros. to take a third share in an Anglo-Franco-German loan to the Porte. Hardinge to Block, 21 Sept. and 17 Nov.1908; Hardinge to Lowther, 21 Sept. and 17 Nov.1908; Hardinge MSS., 13. Lowther to Grey, 6 Sept. and 8 Sept. 1908, F.O.371/549, tels.249 and 253. Grey to Bertie, 7 Sept. 1908, F.O.371/549, tel.137. Bertie to Grey, 11 Sept.1908, F.O.371/549, despt.no.343, and minute by Mallet. Mallet to Rothschild, 11 Sept. 1908; Rothschild to Mallet 16 Sept. and 17 Sept.1908; F.O.371/549. Bertie to Hardinge 4 Nov.1908; Hardinge to Bertie, 8 Nov.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

Their projected National Bank of Turkey was to be essentially an Anglo-Turkish venture. Cassel and his associates were to provide its capital and the Foreign Office was to be given the opportunity to share in the appointment of its directors. This attracted the support of Grey and Hardinge, and also dealt a death blow to Vere's plans for an Anglo-French consortium.⁹⁴ The Ottoman Society had yet to be re-organized on the lines envisaged in July, and as Vere had counted upon having the aid of Cassel the change of this being achieved seemed to be somewhat remote.⁹⁵

The French syndicate had meanwhile been established at Paris and was preparing to commence operations in January 1909.⁹⁶ But its sponsors regarded the National Bank project with some trepidation. On 19 November Gunzburg wrote to Bertie that the National Bank was for the Ottoman Bank 'un gros échec'.⁹⁷ For the Foreign Office this was as good a reason as any for favouring the new institution. In a letter, drafted, but never despatched, to Bertie, Hardinge observed: 'It is sufficiently clear that the Bank scheme is a far more important undertaking than the Ottoman Society and would serve British interests better'.⁹⁸ Only the possible effects of the failure of the consortium plan upon opinion in France caused any serious misgivings inside the Foreign Office about the National Bank.⁹⁹

Bertie knew nothing about the National Bank until 18 November, and he was not aware of the details of the scheme until he received Gunzburg's letter of the 19th. But, even had he so desired,

94. Hardinge to Block, 17 Nov.1908; Hardinge to Gorst, 4 Dec. 1908; Hardinge MSS., 13. Block to Hardinge, 3 Nov.1908; Hardinge to Cassel, 13 Nov.1908; Hardinge to Huth Jackson, 13 Nov.1908; F.O.371/549.

95. Vere to Mallet, 16 June 1908, and minute by Hardinge, F.O.371/538.

96. Bertie to Hardinge, 18 Nov.1908; F.O.371/538, private De Verneuil to Clemenceau, 5 Jan.1909, N.S.362 (A.A.E.)

97. Gunzburg to Bertie, 19 Nov.1908, Bertie MSS., F.O.800/180.

98. Hardinge to Bertie, Nov.1908, F.O.371/538, (cancelled).

99. Minute by Norman on Vere to Mallet 16 Nov.1908, F.O.371/538.

there was little that Bertie could have done to check Hardinge's enthusiasm for Cassel's latest plans. Hardinge was unmoved by French complaints about the National Bank, and when on 14 December Paul Cambon told him that there was a need to re-organize the Ottoman Bank on an equal Anglo-French basis, he was quick to point out that the Quai d'Orsay had ignored repeated British requests on this matter. Besides he claimed that the institution of the National Bank should not be an obstacle to the reform of the Ottoman Bank.¹⁰⁰

Under these conditions the Ottoman Bank was no longer prepared to participate in any British syndicate, and it seemed probable that the French government would proceed with the business alone. It was also apparent that they might through their control over the Paris bourse attempt to bring pressure to bear upon the Ottoman government in the matter of the National Bank scheme. Bertie had learned that the Société Générale, a French house, which Cassel had induced to leave the syndicate, had been informed that it would not be granted a quotation for any securities which it might issue in combination with Cassel. This in Bertie's view had significant implications. It was important to bear in mind, he wrote to Hardinge, that the Turks could not afford to forego a quotation on the Paris bourse, and that such a quotation depended upon the goodwill of the French finance minister.

One solution was offered by Verneuil to Bertie. He suggested that Cassel's group should be substituted for the Ottoman Society as the British part of the Anglo-French consortium.¹⁰¹ There was, however, little support for the idea in London. Hardinge was

100. Hardinge to Lowther, 15 Dec.1908, Hardinge MSS., 13.
P.Cambon to Pichon, 16 Dec.1908, N.S.361, despt.no. 483, (A.A.E.).

101. Bertie to Hardinge, 9 Jan.1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

indifferent towards the fate of the original project, and he informed Bertie that the French could do what they liked with regard to Cassel's bank, but that he thought Cassel could look after himself. If Cassel wanted it, then Hardinge thought the Foreign Office would give him support.¹⁰² Certainly Cassel showed himself to Bertie to be very confident that he had satisfied Clemenceau and Caillaux with promises that he would give the French a share in any concession which he might ultimately obtain at Constantinople.

Bertie had his doubts about whether Cassel had derived a true impression of the feelings of French ministers. He was disinclined to personally broach the subject with Clemenceau or Pichon, for he felt that the part Britain had played, 'however blameless in reality will not seem to the French quite straightforward'. Moreover, he was worried by Hardinge's evident willingness to abandon wholesale the idea of an Anglo-French consortium. The French, he feared, might think that under the old regime Britain felt that she could obtain nothing without French co-operation, but that

...now we feel confident of getting by our own efforts of the Young Turk Party...the concessions we may desire, and that we consequently drop the Anglo-French Combination scheme and instigate Sir Ernest Cassel to start another and will support him against the French Group.

If Clemenceau, Pichon and Caillaux were not satisfied with Cassel's assurances then, Bertie predicted, there would be strong opposition to his scheme from the French at Constantinople, and threats to make things difficult for the Turks on the Paris

102. Hardinge to Bertie, 14 Jan.1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. When Paul Cambon officially informed the Foreign Office of the formation of the French part of the proposed consortium, he expressed the hope that Cassel's group might become the British part of the combination. Grey subsequently informed Cassel that the Foreign Office would be glad if he would work with the French, but the suggestion produced no positive result. P.Cambon to Grey, 28 Jan.1909, and minutes by Hardinge, Grey and Mallet, F.O.371/766. Hardinge to Cassel, 6 Feb.1909, Hardinge MSS., 17.

money market.¹⁰³.

There was much truth in the fears expressed by Bertie. The change of government at Constantinople had modified attitudes within the Foreign Office towards the consortium project. When on 20 January 1909 Vere protested to Mallet that the National Bank would be bitterly opposed by the French, Mallet replied that 'we were top dogs at Constantinople nowadays and it was more likely that the French would wish to make terms with us'. Mallet was still prepared to welcome co-operation with the French, but he was reluctant to give any further official backing to that end. He told Vere 'we must now leave the matter to the financiers and could do nothing more ourselves'.¹⁰⁴ But as Verneuil informed Bertie, the French syndicate were not inclined to accept 'such gifts of charity' as Cassel was prepared to offer them.¹⁰⁵

At Paris Bertie was compelled to defend the Foreign Office against the charges of indifference now brought by Verneuil and others connected with Vere's scheme. Having first protested that the Ottoman Bank had for long stood in the way of the scheme, he claimed that the British government had nothing to do with the withdrawal of Cassel from the English group. They could not, he insisted, have prevented it as they had no control over quotations on the stock exchange, and no such influence in commercial and financial matters as the government had in France.¹⁰⁶

103. Bertie to Grey, 31 Jan.1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

De Verneuil told Bertie that Cassel must have derived a very false impression if he thought Clemenceau was satisfied with his assurances. Bertie to Grey, 1 Feb.1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

104. Minute by Mallet, 20 Jan.1909, F.O.371/766. P.Cambon to Pichon, 28 Jan.1909, N.S.362, despt.no.25. The prospect of renewed Anglo-French rivalry at Constantinople did not greatly worry Hardinge. 'I have no doubt', he observed to Bertie, 'that there will be war at first, but as it will be war amongst the Jews there is little doubt that the Jews will come to terms'. Hardinge to Bertie, 4 Feb.1909, Hardinge MSS., 17.

105. Bertie to Grey, 1 Feb.1909, op.cit.

106. Ibid.

This last contention, which was used by both Hardinge and Mallet to justify Britain's attitude, was diplomatic, but facile.¹⁰⁷ While they had not been responsible for either instigating the National Bank project or the decision of Cassel not to participate in the Ottoman Society, they had neither discouraged the bank nor Cassel.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, though the government may have lacked the formal instruments possessed by Clemenceau and Caillaux for controlling financial establishments, this had not prevented their encouragement of Vere and his associates during the preceding two years. Indeed, by the beginning of 1909 attempts to maintain cordial economic relations with the French, not only in Turkey, but also in Morocco and China, were proving so tiresome that there were signs in the Foreign Office that the failure of Vere's scheme was positively welcomed. In a letter to Bertie of 21 January, in which he criticized the activities of the French and Germans in Morocco, Hardinge concluded:

It is very unfortunate that the French are so unreliable in all financial matters. It makes me think that on the whole it is a good thing for our commercial and industrial people that we failed to get an Anglo-French group.¹⁰⁹

Criticism of the financial aspects of French foreign policy was not limited to the officials of the Foreign Office. Saunders, The Times correspondent at Berlin, who visited Paris in January 1909 was struck by the 'prevailing desire of pecuniary gain' in

107. Hardinge to Lowther, 15 Dec.1908, Hardinge MSS., 13. Minute by Mallet, 20 Jan.1909, op.cit. Hardinge to Grey, 27 Dec.1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/93.

108. Indeed Hardinge had informed Block in November 1908 of his desire 'to get Cassel thoroughly interested in Turkish finance'. Hardinge to Block, 17 Nov.1908, Hardinge MSS., 13.

109. Hardinge to Bertie, 21 Jan.1909; Hardinge to Nicolson, 2 Feb.1909; Hardinge MSS., 17. Similar doubts had already been expressed about French diplomacy by Eyre Crowe. In a minute in which he criticized the 'prominent part played by French diplomatic and consular officers in obtaining from foreign governments orders and contracts for French commercial firms'. he concluded: 'French policy in most foreign countries is very largely influenced by the prospects of direct pecuniary benefit to be derived by the officials and ministers...it is sometimes as difficult to be bound to co-operate with the French (see China railways) as to be opposed by them'. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 20 Oct.1908, F.O.371/456, despt.no.420.

France. He told Carnegie, Lister's successor at the Paris embassy, that he thought French policy to be 'largely if not wholly influenced by the idea of gain'.¹¹⁰ Even Bertie, who could not completely endorse Hardinge's views, was unhappy about the part played by finance in the determination of France's policy in the Near East. The pro-Greek attitude assumed by Pichon in connexion with the Cretan question, he had in part attributed to French desires for commercial profit, and French financiers supported by Caillaux, he believed to be one of the chief obstacles in the way of a settlement of the sum which Bulgaria would pay Turkey to indemnify her losses.¹¹¹

In their turn, the French complained of Britain's conduct at Constantinople.¹¹² When on 19 January Bertie accused the French government of taking a benevolent attitude towards Bulgaria on the indemnity question for financial reasons, Pichon replied that the British government 'ought not by pressing Turkish claims too strongly to endeavour to monopolize the goodwill of Turkey'. There was widespread suspicion in France, Pichon explained, that the British government had far-reaching designs, and that the boycott system of the Young Turks had been adopted on their advice, or at all events with their encouragement.¹¹³

110. Memorandum by Carnegie enclosed in Bertie to Grey, 1 Feb. 1909, B.D. vii, no.148.

Lancelot D.Carnegie, was councillor at the British embassy at Paris from 1908 until 1913.

111. Bertie to Grey, 3 Dec.1908, F.O.371/445, tel.105. Bertie to Grey, 20 Jan.1909, F.O.371/745, tel.12. Bertie to Grey, 8 Jan 1909, F.O.371/747, despt.no.12. Bertie to Grey, 12 Jan.1909, F.O.371/747, tel.6. Bertie to Grey, 17 Jan.1909, F.O.371/748, tel.11. Bertie to Grey, 17 Jan.1909, F.O.371/748, despt.no.33.

112. Constans complained to Pichon that the British 'semblent vouloir confisquer à leur profit la Jeune Turquie'. Constans to Pichon, 23 Jan.1909, N.S.362, despt.no.33, (A.A.E.). P.Cambon to Pichon, 28 Jan.1909, N.S.362, despt.no.25 (A.A.E.)

113. Bertie to Grey, 20 Jan.1909, op.cit. Annual Report for France, 1909, op.cit. Constans to Pichon, 25 Jan.1909, D.D.F.2, xi, no.618.

Some ten days later Verneuil told Bertie that Clemenceau would not allow Cassel a quotation on the bourse, and from another 'financial friend' Bertie learned that Caillaux was putting it about that 'les Anglais commencent à nous embêter à Constantinople'.¹¹⁴ Clemenceau, who was evidently considerably irritated by the consortium business, was bitter in his complaints over British policy and their attitude towards France. 'The English', he exclaimed to Saunders on 1 February, 'want to get everything in Turkey for themselves'. His resentment was certainly not softened by a British suggestion for bringing Germany into a projected Anglo-French railway loan in China. Astonished at this proposition and angry at British conduct, he told Saunders: 'There is a cleft in the entente, and care must be taken that it does not widen'.

Saunders, who recounted his interview to Carnegie, doubted if France wanted a strong Turkey, and hinted that in this respect French and German interests were alike. 'There seemed', he observed, 'to be a danger that France and Germany might come to some understanding on the subject to the detriment of English interests in Turkey and of Turkey herself'. Indeed, the presence of the prince of Monaco in Paris and his interviews with the president and the minister of finance added credence to these views.

Carnegie's record of his conversations with Saunders caused some consternation in the Foreign Office.¹¹⁵ It raised doubts not only about Anglo-French financial co-operation in Turkey, but also about the whole future of the entente. Tyrrell, who was impressed by Clemenceau's 'état d'âme' disliked the way in which

114. Bertie to Grey, 1 Feb. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Caillaux was particularly perturbed about Block's desire to have the Turkish tobacco regie, which served as a security for foreign loans, absorbed by the Ottoman debt council. Note by Caillaux, D.D.F.2, xi, no.643.

115. Memorandum by Carnegie, op.cit.

he seemed to accept every criticism of Britain, but almost to resent being set right in his facts. In a letter to Bertie of 3 February he observed that several people who had lately been to Paris had told him that everybody they met there had said that of course England wanted war to result from the eastern crisis on the off chance of France getting dragged into a conflict with Germany, which would relieve Britain of any further ship-building against Germany. He concluded:

Of course they are wholly misinformed people who say this, but it takes one back to the days before the entente when every lie was swallowed which told against us, but even people who should be better informed appear to have swallowed the favourite insinuation put about by interested parties to the effect that England had always required an army on the Continent and that at present it is France who is "soldat de l'Angleterre en Europe".¹¹⁶

Bertie, however, was unworried by Clemenceau's outburst, and he tried to reassure Tyrrell. 'What Clemenceau may say on occasions', he explained, 'must not always be taken quite literally. There were plenty of people not only in France, but all the world over, who said that England wanted a continental war for the opportunity of destroying the German fleet. In the event of a war, Bertie thought that Britain and France would be dependent upon each other for the arm in which each was deficient. 'The French', he observed, 'are not always pleasant bedfellows but we might go further (viz. Berlin) and fare worse'.¹¹⁷

Bertie also suggested that one reason for Clemenceau's opposition to Britain bringing Germany into the Chinese railway loan project was that the French themselves would like to have proposed it. This may not have been far from the truth.¹¹⁸

116. Tyrrell to Bertie, 3 Feb. 1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

117. Bertie to Tyrrell, 14 Feb. 1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

118. Bertie to Grey, 3 Feb. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

On 6 February he was informed by Pichon that an agreement had been negotiated between the French and German governments on Morocco.¹¹⁹ Moreover, on 18 February Bertie learned from a 'reliable source' that an agreement had been concluded between the French group, which had been intended to form part of the Anglo-French consortium, and a German group, which included the Deutsche Bank.¹²⁰ By the beginning of March Block was reporting from Constantinople that the Ottoman Bank had emerged there in open alignment with German finance.¹²¹ Not only had Bertie to witness the achievement by Germany of a rapprochement with France in Morocco, but he had also to reckon with a renewal of Franco-German collaboration in Turkish finance.

Prior to 6 February the Foreign Office had received few indications about an impending agreement between France and Germany. The first warnings had come from Lister, who had recently succeeded Gerard Lowther as British minister at Tangier. Rumours of a Franco-German entente had reached The Times, and on 11 January Lister telegraphed to Grey that their correspondent at Tangier had been instructed to make enquiries.¹²² By the 15th he had good reason to think that Germany desired an understanding with France in Morocco.¹²³ As to what the form and substance of such an understanding might be, Grey's officials had only been able to speculate. Clemenceau's language to Saunders led one of them to conclude that if an arrangement were made, it would 'probably not be such as would commend itself to us'.¹²⁴

119. Bertie to Grey, 6 Feb. 1909, B.D., vii, no. 149. Bertie to Grey, 8 Feb. 1909, F.O. 371/695, despt. no. 62.

120. Bertie to Grey, 18 Feb. 1909, B.D., v, no. 579.

121. Block to Hardinge, 2 March 1909, F.O. 371/762.

122. Lister to Grey, 11 Jan. 1909, B.D., vii, no. 146. Gerard Lowther was British minister at Tangier from 1905 to 1908, and ambassador at Constantinople from then until 1913.

123. Lister to Grey, 15 Jan. 1909, B.D., vii, no. 147.

124. Minute by Spicer on memorandum by Carnegie, op.cit. Hardinge had learned from Goschen at the end of January that Bülow and Schoen had suggested to Jules Cambon that they might have negotiations about Morocco. Goschen to Hardinge, 29 Jan. 1909, Hardinge MSS., 15.

In fact the Franco-German declaration of 9 February and the explanatory notes exchanged by the two governments pledged German political disinterest in Morocco, in return for French promises of commercial and financial co-operation. It was the sort of arrangement that had already been envisaged in the discussions which had taken place between the representatives of France and Germany during the summer of 1907.¹²⁵ But in sanctioning an agreement with Germany at a time when relations between the great powers were strained by the problems of the Near East, and when Anglo-German relations were hardly at their best, Clemenceau had apparently been ready to risk causing some disharmony in the entente. Caillaux subsequently claimed that Clemenceau had not been a party to the negotiations for the accord, and that he had been presented with a fait accompli by Pichon and other members of the French cabinet.¹²⁶ Bertie, himself, had noted on 3 January that the French premier and his colleagues were divided, and that Pichon was 'kicking' against Clemenceau's interference in the administration of the Quai d'Orsay.¹²⁷ Moreover, on 8 February Paul Cambon wrote to a friend that according to his knowledge Clemenceau was not yet aware of the agreement made with Germany.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, recent research had tended to support the view that the agreement was consistent with Clemenceau's desire to avoid a fresh quarrel with Germany over Morocco, and that his prime concern was to avoid the involvement of France in a war arising out of the Bosnian affair.¹²⁹

125. Pichon to Bompard, 8 Feb. 1909, D.D.F.2, xi, no. 642.

J. Cambon to Pichon, 9 Feb. 1909, D.D.F.2, xii, no. 2.

126. Caillaux, i, 274-277. This view is also upheld in R. Poidevin, pp. 458-466.

127. Bertie to Grey, 3 Jan. 1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/165. Six weeks later Bertie reported to Grey: 'Not long ago Pichon showed irritation against Clemenceau and anti-German tendencies'. Bertie to Grey, 18 Feb. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/51.

128. P. Cambon to Xavier Charmes, 8 Feb. 1909, Correspondence, II, 273-276.

129. Ubi supra, E.W. Edwards. D.R. Watson, Georges Clemenceau, pp. 226-234; and 'The making of French foreign policy during the first Clemenceau ministry, 1906-1909', English Historical Review, lxxxvi (1971), 774-782. But Jules Cambon told Goschen in January 1909 that he was by no means certain that Clemenceau shared his view that an effort should be made to satisfy Germany's armour propre. Goschen to Hardinge, 29 Jan. 1909, Hardinge MSS., 15.

An arrangement with Germany may, however, have been made all the more acceptable to Clemenceau by the attitude adopted by the British government towards co-operation with France in Turkey.¹³⁰

Bertie had little or no foreknowledge of the negotiations which had led to the conclusion of the Franco-German agreement. Nor for that matter does he seem to have regarded it as constituting a radical change in France's foreign policy. In his annual report for 1908, which he submitted to the Foreign Office on 30 April 1909 he stated that he had no reason to alter the conclusions of the foreign policy of France which he had formed in 1907.¹³¹ A year later in his report for 1909 he made it clear that his views on this subject remained unchanged.¹³² Moreover, his private correspondence is more remarkable for the sparcity of its references to the Franco-German arrangement than for any warnings of the danger that it might pose to Britain's interests. Unlike the Russians, he did not connect the accord with the apparently accommodating stance assumed by Pichon towards Austria's demands that Serbia should desist from claiming compensation for the annexation of Bosnia. On 6 March the king, who was on a private visit to France, gave Bertie to understand that the Russian embassy at London were anxious that he should tell the French not to carry on their 'flirtation' with Germany. Bertie, however, suggested that the king should confine himself to discussing with Clemenceau the state of the drains at Biarritz. The French, he explained, 'were anxious not to indispose Austria towards them so as to cause her to bear malice in the future, and they therefore sought

130. Another of Clemenceau's biographers has claimed that Clemenceau's annoyance with Britain's policy towards Crete explains his acceptance of the agreement with Germany. G. Bruun, Clemenceau (Cambridge, Mass. 1944), pp. 101-102.

131. General Report on France, 1908, op.cit.

132. Annual Report for France, 1909, op.cit.

to find a compromise with Germany that Austria would accept'.¹³³

Bertie's colleagues in London displayed more scepticism with regard to the Franco-German agreement. Hardinge may have regarded it as a 'complete vindication of the Anglo-French "Entente"', but others within the Foreign Office were concerned lest concessions had been made by France to Germany of which they did not know.¹³⁴ 'Germany', minuted Spicer, 'must certainly have got some quid quo pro the nature of which we must make some effort to ascertain. Villiers thought, and Langley agreed, that the quid pro quo might have taken the form of a tacit understanding as regards contracts and commercial affairs. Even Grey appears to have felt some disquiet over whether the British government had been fully informed of the terms of the agreement, and whether or not they might suffer commercially as the result of it.'¹³⁵ He warned Cambon that it was not necessary to renounce the entente 'aujourd'hui que le ciel s'est éclairci, car il peut s'obscurcir de nouveau. C'est maintenant qu'il faut reserrer notre entente'.¹³⁶

133. Bertie to Grey, 6 March 1909, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/165. Bertie probably sympathized with Pichon's attitude towards Russia during the Bosnian crisis. On 16 December 1908 he suggested to Pichon that 'the Russian Government counting on French and British support would press the claims of Serbia and Montenegro too hard'. Bertie to Grey, 16 Dec.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

134. Grey to Bertie, 11 Feb.1909, B.D., vii, no.157 and note 1. On 6 February Hardinge informed Cassel that he sincerely trusted that the improvement in Franco-German relations would continue. Hardinge to Cassel, 6 Feb.1909, Hardinge MSS., 17.

135. Minutes by Villiers, Spicer, Langley and Grey on Bertie to Grey, 6 Feb.1909, B.D., vii, no.149. Mallet also seems to have suspected that the British government were not fully informed of all that had been settled between Franco and Germany. Minute by Mallet on Bertie to Grey, 18 Feb.1909, F.O.371/750, tel.31. G.F.Villiers was a clerk in the Foreign Office from 1903 until 1913. G.S.Spicer was an assistant clerk from 1906 until 1912.

136. P.Cambon to Pichon, 25 Feb.1909, D.D.F.2, xii, no.58. Grey to Bertie, 16 Feb.1909, B.D., vii, no.158. While Paul Cambon was pleased with the Franco-German accord, he was also perturbed about what the British reaction would be to an economic agreement between France and Germany. He was even more worried about proposals which were then before the French parliament for raising French import duties. He seems even to have thought in terms of an Anglo-French commercial treaty as a counterbalance to France's arrangement with Germany. P.Cambon to Pichon, 11 Feb. and 20 Feb.1909, N.S.50, despt.nos.46 and 63 (A.A.E). P.Cambon to Pichon 6 Feb.1909, Pichon MSS., 4396 (B.I.F.) On the tariff question see: R.Poidevin, 'Protectionisme et relations internationales: l'exemple du tarif douanier français de 1910', Revue Historique ccxlv (1971), 47-62.

It was ironic that at a time when it was becoming apparent that the attempt to construct an Anglo-French consortium in Turkey had failed, that France and Germany should have concluded an arrangement which envisaged their collaboration in the economic exploitation of Morocco. Yet neither of these events seem to have unduly disturbed Bertie's faith in the future of the entente. Indeed to judge from his correspondence he would appear to have attached more importance to the resignation of Clemenceau on 20 July than to the agreement of 9 February. 'Clemenceau is', he lamented, 'a great loss from an English point of view as regards the Foreign Policy of France'. Though at times impulsive and over hasty in his judgements, Bertie had found him to be open to persuasion, and ready to temper his actions to meet the needs of the entente.¹³⁷ His successor, the former minister of justice, Aristide Briand, brought into his administration Jean Dupuy, who was credited with pro-German sympathies, and Millerand, whom Bertie expected to work for a closer understanding with Germany.¹³⁸ But Pichon remained at the Quai d'Orsay, and so long as he stayed there Bertie was convinced that there would be no important change in the attitude of the French government towards Britain.¹³⁹

Bertie's confidence was not misplaced. That the entente had its limits, and that it could not easily be translated into economic co-operation at Constantinople was again demonstrated by the failure in the autumn of 1910 of an attempt to effect the

137. Bertie was on holiday at Bagnoles-de-l'Orne when Clemenceau resigned. There he expressed his concern to Jules Cambon. J. Cambon to Pichon, 25 July 1909, Pichon MSS., 4396 (B.I.F.) Bertie to Grey, 22 July and 26 July, 1909, F.O.371/668, despt.nos.289 and 296.

138. Bertie to Grey, 3 Aug. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie to Grey, 4 Aug. 1909, F.O.371/669, despt.no.316. Aristide Briand was premier from 1909 until 1911. He was to be president of the council on ten more occasions. Jean Dupuy had been minister of agriculture in Waldeck Rousseau's government.

139. Bertie to Grey, 3 Aug, 1909, B.D., ix, pt.1, no.28.

merger of the National Banks with the Ottoman Bank.¹⁴⁰ Yet, on the other hand, the collaboration of French and German banking institutions was not sufficient to form the basis of a real political rapprochement between their governments. Even in Morocco, where they had agreed on a political and economic accommodation, Franco-German co-operation was to last barely two years. In truth such negotiations as those to form Vere's projected consortium were peripheral to the politics of the entente. French and German nationals with or without the encouragement of their governments might from time to time collaborate to the detriment of Britain's interests. So long, however, as France remained unreconciled to the existing status quo in Europe, and Germany was unwilling to contemplate change, there was, as Bertie recognized, little chance of France deserting Britain for a wider Franco-German understanding.¹⁴¹

140. Grey continued to hope for collaboration between British and French finance in Turkey. Indeed, in the autumn of 1910 he showed himself ready to sacrifice the interests of the National Bank for the sake of maintaining French goodwill. Memorandum by Grey, 16 Aug. 1909, enclosed in Tyrrell to Lowther, 18 Aug. 1909, Lowther MSS., F.O.800/193, A. Memorandum on recent Ottoman Loan Negotiations, communicated by H. Babington-Smith to the Foreign Office, 4 Oct. 1910, F.O.371/993.

141. Jules Cambon told the German chancellor on 10 June 1911, 'il n'y aura jamais d'entente cordiale entre nous; nous sommes divisés par une question que, ni vous, ni nous, ne pouvons aborder'. J. Cambon to Cruppi, 11 June 1911, D.D.F.2, xiii, no. 349.

Chapter VI.

Relations with Germany and

the Aerial Navigation Conference of 1910.

Bertie's views on German policies and objectives changed very little between 1906 and 1912. Germany and the ambitions which he attributed to her remained in his opinion the principal menace to the continental equilibrium and the security of the British empire. Her diplomatic manoeuvring therefore gave Bertie constant cause for comment and concern, and he was rarely slow to warn the Foreign Office of the dangers which he foresaw in negotiating with Berlin. Yet his own role in the exchanges which took place between the British and German governments on the question of a naval arrangement and other related issues was largely confined to explaining Grey's policy to the Quai d'Orsay, and reporting and predicting French reactions to London. Only in the autumn of 1910 when he was appointed the principal British delegate at the Aerial Navigation Conference at Paris did he have the opportunity to personally combat what he understood to be a German threat to Britain's strategic interests. Even then his main achievement proved to be that of saving Pichon from the vagaries of his officials.

The period of relative calm in relations between the great powers which followed the Algecirras conference did not lead Bertie to abandon any of his suspicions about Germany's intentions. Indeed, he seems only to have been confirmed in his views by the reluctance of Germany to accept any restrictions upon her armaments, and the prospect of an acceleration in her warship building programme such as was engendered by the supplementary

naval law of January 1908.¹ While he expressed himself to Grey as glad that the visit of the Emperor William to England in the autumn of 1907 had been a success, and that Anglo-German relations were likely to improve, he at the same time reminded the foreign secretary that Germany's attitude at the recent Hague peace conference in regard to 'obligatory arbitration, mines at sea, and the limitation of armaments, and her naval programme' were disagreeable facts. 'It looks', he informed Grey, 'like a trial of strength whether the British public or the German people will be the first to tire of the cost of inflated expenditure'.²

Where colonial matters were concerned the general tenor of the advice proffered by Bertie to the Foreign Office was that the British government should seek to restrict Germany's opportunities for menacing Britain's interests. His approach to the subject of Anglo-German naval rivalry was equally unconciliatory, and he could offer no solution other than that Britain should continue to outbuild Germany in warships. 'The only chance of doing any good', he observed in August 1908, 'is for the Emperor to be told that we will go on building up to the proportion of the Two Power Standard, and that consequently the question of the heavy expenditure rests with him'.³ It was hardly a point of view which could be easily reconciled with the accommodation with Germany on naval matters that was pursued by Grey and Hardinge during the summer of 1908.⁴ But naval rivalry was for Bertie

1. For a recent examination of German naval policy and relations between Great Britain and Germany see: G.Ritter, The Sword and Scepter, (4 vols., Miami, 1970), ii, 137-191.

2. Grey to Bertie, 20 Nov.1907, B.D., vi, no.69. Bertie to Grey, 25 Nov.1907, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

3. Bertie to Tyrrell, 20 Aug.1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170.

4. Grey was anxious that Germany should be given no excuse for saying 'that she is being cold shouldered, isolated, or squeezed'. Grey to Bertie, 12 Nov.1908, B.D., vi, no.135. E.L.Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy, (Oxford, 1935), pp.174-181.

essentially a reflection of more fundamental differences between Britain and Germany, which, resulted from the acquisitive nature of the latter's policy. When radical ministers dared to suggest in public that there was room for an Anglo-German rapprochement, this provoked a characteristically caustic reaction from the Paris embassy.⁵

In an address to a miners' rally at Swansea on 17 August Churchill affirmed that no British government could depart in any degree from a naval policy which would secure Britain effectively against invasion, but he also said that there was 'no collision of primary interests...between Great Britain and Germany in any quarter of the globe'. Meanwhile at Karlsbad Lloyd George, who had recently become chancellor of the exchequer, ventured in an interview with a correspondent of the Viennese Neue Freie Presse to invite the powers to consult with Britain with a view to the limitation of armaments.⁶ Neither minister had really gone much beyond what had already been said in private by Grey and Hardinge, but from Paris Bertie protested to Tyrrell: 'Very silly young men Messrs. Lloyd George and Churchill are outside their functions'. He dismissed as worthless the assurances already given by Bülow

5. Bertie told Pichon in February 1909 with reference to Anglo-German relations that he did not think 'the question of the ships' was one 'capable of solution'. Bertie to Grey, 8 Feb. 1909, no. 26 F.O. 371/675. Bertie to Nicolson, 15 March 1911, Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/186.

6. M.L. Dockrill, 'David Lloyd George and Foreign Policy before 1914' in A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), Lloyd George: twelve essays (London, 1971), p. 8. R.S. Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, (London, 1967) ii, 511-514. De Manneville to Pichon, 18 Aug. 1908, D.D.F.2. xi, no. 424. When in the April of 1908 Lloyd George had as president of the board of trade been invited to Paris by the French minister of commerce Tyrrell had written to Bertie: 'A pleasant stay in Paris may contribute to complete his conversion and anything you would say or do in that direction would be of great use. Moreover, he is in all likelihood soon going to a higher post than he occupies at present in the Government'. Another official, Algernon Law, had also pressed Bertie to instil in Lloyd George 'a sound suspicion of German policy particularly in regard to the increase of the German Navy'. Bertie had doubted if he could do more than offer Lloyd George (more than) a 'dish of tea'. Ultimately, however, he was deprived of even this pleasure by ministerial changes in Britain and the cancellation of the visit. Tyrrell to Bertie, 3 April 1908, and 8 April 1908; Bertie to Tyrrell, 4 April 1908 and 5 April 1908; A. Law to Bertie, 5 April 1908; Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/165.

and William II of their peaceful intentions, and he thought it unlikely that the emperor would accept a naval limitations agreement. On this point he observed:

It would be a surrender in the face of the world and would be observed so long and in such a manner as would suit him. We would carry out our promises in the spirit as well as the letter. Germany would jockey as she has done in so many other questions. If the Emperor is convinced that all parties likely to be in power in England will go on building to keep ahead of Germany and any other country together he may perhaps not adhere to his inflated programme.

He imagined that the French view of the pronouncements of Lloyd George and Churchill was that as they had said the only issue between England and Germany was the fleets which England meant to treat as heretofore, there could not be any agreement. If there were a 'make believe one (oral)', then, Bertie predicted, the emperor or his government would 'wriggle out' of it and the race would start again.⁷

Bertie's views on German diplomacy were hardly modified by efforts of Bülow's successor, von Bethmann Hollweg, to better Germany's relations with Great Britain and Russia.⁸ The prospect of Germany attempting to drive a wedge between Britain and France was never far from Bertie's mind, and he persistently drew the attention of the Foreign Office to what he regarded as

7. Bertie to Tyrrell, 20 Aug. 1908, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/170. Lloyd George subsequently insisted to Asquith: 'My interview in the Vienna Neue Freie Presse was purely a repetition of statements made by you and Sir E. Grey'. Lloyd George to Asquith, 21 Aug. 1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/101. This was not however, the only occasion on which Lloyd George's conduct was to embarrass Bertie. In

December 1910 Lloyd George accorded an interview to the socialist Humanité which according to Pichon irritated Briand. Pichon told Briand: 'Mr. George is a Celt and not an Englishman and that he should not attach too much importance to anything Mr. George may have said to the reporter respecting him (M. Briand) or the French Government'. Bertie to Grey, 25 Dec. 1910, Grey MSS., F.O.800/170.

8. K.H. Jarausch, The Enigmatic Chancellor, (New Haven and London, 1973), pp. 108-119. G. Ritter, ii, 164-167. Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg was German minister of the interior from 1907 until 1909. From then until 1917 he was imperial chancellor.

Germany's efforts to undermine French confidence in the entente. In his annual report for 1909 he pointed out that the French feared that Britain might come to an agreement with Germany behind their backs and in a sense detrimental to their interests. 'I do not say that the minister for foreign affairs apprehends this', he observed, 'but German agents put this fact constantly before those with whom they come into contact in France and from time to time it produces a momentary effect'. There would, he thought, be no objection in France to a rapprochement between Great Britain and Germany so long as it aimed at the removal of outstanding difficulties. Only if Grey were to attempt an understanding on general policy did Bertie fear that Criticism of the entente would become popular in France.⁹

In the years that preceded the Agadir crisis Bertie need not have worried over the effects of British policy towards Germany upon France. Much as Grey may have sympathized with the idea of achieving a better understanding with the Germans, he was emphatic in his view that it must be one 'which will not imperil those which we have with France and Russia'.¹⁰ Moreover, progress towards an Anglo-German rapprochement was bedevilled by Britain's distrust of Germany's naval policy, and the German insistence that a naval agreement must either follow, or form part of, a general political accord. While Bethmann Hollweg could offer no more than a reduction of the tempo of Germany's existing naval programme,

9. Annual Report for France, 1909. Bertie to Grey, 12 March 1910. F.O.371/898.

10. Grey to Goschen, 1 Sept.1909, B.D.vi, no.195. Grey minuted in April 1909: 'An entente with Germany...would serve to establish German hegemony in Europe and would not last long after it had served that purpose. It is in fact an invitation to help Germany to make a European combination which would be directed against us when it suited her to use it'. Minute by Grey on Goschen to Grey, 16 April 1909, F.O.371/673, despt.no.141.

he required a pledge that Britain would stand aside if Germany were attacked by one or more powers. As Grey and his officials were well aware, this might be interpreted as a promise of neutrality in the event of a Franco-German war, and in November 1909 the discussions with Berlin were allowed to lapse.¹¹

In France Pichon showed every confidence in the explanations offered to him by Grey with regard to the Anglo-German pourparlers, and he seems to have harboured no illusions about the chances of their success.¹² After a discussion with the foreign minister on 7 October Bertie observed to Grey that from his manner he had gathered that 'he does not think that the Germans mean business except to endeavour to humbug us'.¹³ Only in November when there were references in the German press to the advantages to be derived from a naval agreement with England did Pichon begin to exhibit any signs of nervousness. Reports from Brussels of a possible Anglo-German arrangement affecting the Congo, and a favourable reference to relations with Germany in a speech to Asquith added to Pichon's concern.¹⁴ After an appeal to London Bertie was

11. K. Robbins, pp.204-207. C.J. Lowe and M.L. Dockrill, The Mirage of Power (3 vols. London, 1972), i, 29-37.

12. Bertie to Grey, 1 Sept. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie to Grey, 9 Sept. 1909, private, F.O.371/695. Bertie Grey, 20 Nov. 1909, B.D., vi, no.206.

13. Bertie to Grey, 7 Oct. 1909, F.O.371/675.

14. Bertie to Grey, 11 Nov. 1909 (2 letters of this date), Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. A Court Repington to Grey, 23 Nov. 1909. Grey MSS., F.O.800/110. During 1909 the British and German governments did co-operate in an effort to settle their frontiers in the Mfumbiro region of the Congo. Bethmann Hollweg also thought in terms of pursuing a common policy with Britain with regard to the internal affairs of the Belgian Congo. But Grey was not disposed towards pursuing separate negotiations with Germany on this issue. Jacques Willequet, 'Anglo-German Rivalry in Portuguese Africa?' in P. Gifford and Wm.R. Louis, Britain and Germany in Africa (London, 1967), pp.253-256. Wm.R. Louis, Ruanda Urundi, 1884-1919, (Oxford 1963), pp.52-65 and 79-92. After the very favourable welcome given in London to the German colonial secretary in November 1909, Paul Cambon wrote to re-assure Pichon that the vital interests of England and Germany were directly opposed. He concluded 'pour le moment, il est impossible de prévoir un véritable rapprochement entre les deux pays'. P. Cambon to Pichon, 2 Dec. 1909. D.D.F.2, xii, no.366.

able to re-assure Pichon with regard to Britain's attitude towards the Congo, and on 20 November he repeated to him Grey's promise to consult the French government if negotiations with Germany went beyond 'general assurances of goodwill'. Not that Pichon was in Bertie's opinion likely to believe any statement disseminated by the German government or press that Britain was seeking to ingratiate herself with Germany to the detriment of her relations with France. But he thought that it would be useful to him to be able to refute such allegations.¹⁵

What disturbed both Pichon and Bertie more than the course of Anglo-German relations was the progress made in the following year towards an accord between Russia and Germany in the Middle East. German complaints in February and March 1910 about the terms attached to a joint Anglo-Russian loan to Persia led both Izvolsky and the British Foreign Office to conclude that the German government were intent upon dividing them.¹⁶ To Pichon Bertie expressed the fear that the Germans were playing the same game as they had played in Morocco, and that Izvolsky might through weakness be driven into an understanding with Germany. He at the same time tried to persuade Pichon to bolster up the Russian government. After having learned that Izvolsky was to lunch with Pichon on 13 March, he pressed the French foreign minister to advise him to be 'very firm' in dealing with Berlin.¹⁷

15. Grey to Bertie, 16 Nov. 1909; Bertie to Grey, 20 Nov. 1909 (2 letters of this date), Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

16. Nicolson to Grey, 2 April 1910, B.D., vi, no.338. F. Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914 (Yale, 1968), pp. 549-551.

17. Bertie to Grey, 13 April 1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Hardinge to Nicolson, 26 April 1910, Hardinge MSS., 21.

Events in the autumn of 1910 seemed to offer some justification for Bertie's suspicions about German diplomacy. On 4 and 5 November the German and Russian emperors in the company of Bethmann Hollweg, the German foreign secretary, Kiderlen-Wächter, and the acting Russian foreign minister, Sazanov met at Potsdam. There they arrived at a general understanding on their political and commercial interests in Persia and the Bagdad Railway, the details of which were to be worked out later at St. Petersburg by the German ambassador and Sazonov.¹⁸

Bertie suspected that the Germans had duped the Russians at Potsdam in much the same way as he thought the Austrians had done at Buchlau. After learning that Bethmann Hollweg had allowed Sazonov to think that Germany was about to settle with England on the Bagdad railway, he wrote to Nicolson, who had recently succeeded Hardinge at the Foreign Office, 'Sazonov has been roule by the Bethmann-Hollweg-Kiderlen-Wächter combination as was Isvolsky by Aehrenthal'.¹⁹ Yet the Russians were probably less the unwilling victims of German diplomacy than Bertie at first imagined. Indeed, Pichon's subsequent efforts to defend Sazonov's diplomacy against its critics in the French parliament led Bertie to complain to Grey in February 1911 that the foreign minister was thereby encouraging the Russians to believe that he would accept anything that they should choose to do.²⁰

18. Bertie to Grey, 18 Nov. 1910, B.D., pt. 1, no. 613. Bertie and Pichon agreed to pool their information on the subject of the Potsdam meeting. Bertie to Pichon, 18 Nov. 1910, Pichon MSS., (B.I.F.), 4395. From St. Petersburg Louis, the French ambassador there warned Pichon of the danger that prolonged Russo-German negotiations might touch on subjects of more interest to France than Persia. Louis to Pichon, 19 Jan. 1911, D.D.F.2, xiii, no. 122.

Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter was German foreign secretary from 1910 until 1912. Sergei Sazonov was acting Russian foreign minister from 1909 until 1910 when he succeeded Izvolsky.

19. Bertie to Grey, 16 Nov. 1910 and 2 Dec. 1910; Bertie to Nicolson, 5 Dec. 1910; B.D., x, pt. 1, nos. 611, 615 and 616.

20. Bertie to Grey, 19 Jan. 1911, B.D., x, pt. 1, no. 655. Bertie to Grey, 15 Jan. 1911, and 18 Jan. 1911; Bertie to Nicolson, 4 Feb. 1911; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Bertie to Grey, 2 Feb. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Bertie to Hardinge, 16 March 1911, Hardinge MSS., 92.

By the autumn of 1910 Germany seems in Bertie's eyes to have been seeking advantages at the expense of Britain and France in almost every sphere of diplomacy. Even an attempt to achieve agreement amongst the powers on the future governance of aerial navigation appeared in Bertie's opinion to provide Germany with the opportunity to twist international law in order to suit her purposes.

It was at the instigation of the French government that an international conference on the law relating to aerial navigation assembled at Paris on 18 May 1910.²¹ Since in London it was expected that this gathering would concern itself primarily with matters such as identification markings and customs regulations, the Foreign Office took no part in the preliminary discussions relating to it.²² The delegation appointed to represent Great Britain was headed by a naval officer, Admiral Sir Douglas Gamble, and but for recommending Reginald Bridgeman, the embassy's third secretary, as joint secretary to the British delegation, Bertie was disinterested in the initial proceedings of the conference.²³ To the surprise, however, of the Foreign Office, the delegates at Paris moved with almost indecent haste to an issue which seemed to menace the security of the British isles.

Of special concern to the British government was the attempt of the French and German delegations to establish the 'freedom of

21. Annual Report for France, 1910, Bertie to Grey, 1 Aug. 1911, F.O. 371/1119. S.W. Roskill (ed.), Documents Relating to the Naval Air Service, vol. 1, (The Navy Records Society, 1969), pp. 13-14.

22. Ibid. M. Hankey, The Supreme Command (2 vols., London, 1961), i, 110. Eyre Crowe suggested that a junior member of the embassy at Paris might be one of the British representatives at the conference. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Home Office to Foreign Office, 3 May 1910, F.O. 368/405.

23. Bertie to Grey, 12 May 1910, F.O. 368/405, private. Admiral Sir Douglas Gamble was the naval adviser to the Turkish government

the air' as a principle of international law. According to proposals put forward by them on 10 June each state was to be allowed to impose restrictions on ^aserial navigation above its territory, but these were to be applied equally to native and foreign aircraft. After British objections this was amended, and a draft convention was formulated by which governments were to be permitted to restrict the movement of foreign aircraft in 'extra-ordinary circumstances' and in the interests of national defence. Nevertheless, when on 20 June this was put before the standing committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, it too was rejected.

The basis of the British opposition to the projected formula was the fear expressed in the defence committee that the Germans were endeavouring to tie the hands of the smaller powers adjacent to them on the North sea in order to facilitate the free passage of their airships. The Germans might, it was maintained, attempt to compensate for their relative inferiority in cruisers suitable for scouting by utilizing their great superiority in dirigible balloons. If Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands were to sign the draft convention, German navigators would have freedom of passage to the sea lanes surrounding Britain without having to worry about the possibility of an unpremeditated descent into neutral territory. They might also be able to land in order to refuel and transmit telegraph messages. Any attempt by these states to claim the existence of 'extraordinary circumstances' would, the committee feared, be countered by the Germans, who armed with an international declaration on the 'freedom of the air', would be able to put strong diplomatic pressure upon them. 'It would appear', they concluded, 'that the proper policy of this country is to reserve not only for herself but also for minor Powers, the right to make whatever municipal laws and

regulations they think fit regarding the landing and navigation of all airships'.²⁴ Grey accepted these views, and after the intervention of Gamble the conference was adjourned on 29 June.²⁵

Apart from the wording of the draft convention the officials of the Foreign Office were also perturbed by the close relationship which had developed between the chief French and German delegates, Louis Renault and Johannes Kriege.²⁶ Both men were jurists and had worked together at the time of the Casablanca deserters affair. Renault was a scholar of repute: a fact which in Bertie's opinion was the cause of many of the difficulties to which the conference gave rise. It seemed to British observers that he had put his duties as chairman of the conference before those which he had as the representative of France, and that he had paid little attention to the strategic and political implications of the German proposals. This in the view of Bertie and his colleagues had played into the hands of Kriege. According to Bertie, Renault was regarded by the representatives of the other powers as 'unfit for the job he had undertaken, a University Professor full of law and nothing else'.²⁷ On the other hand, Kriege was believed by the British delegates to have arrived at

24. The C.I.D. had established a sub-committee on aerial navigation in January 1909. On the work of this body see: R.Higham, The British Rigid Airship 1908-1931. A Study in Weapons Policy (London, 1961), pp.34-47. Gamble to Troup, 10 June 1910; Minutes of the meeting of 20 June 1910 of the sub-committee of the C.I.D. to consider certain questions raised by the British delegates at the International Conference on Aerial Navigation; F.O.368/405. On 23 June Grey instructed Bertie to suggest to the French that they should consult with the British government before taking any step towards accepting the principles proposed at the conference. Grey to Bertie, 23 June 1910, F.O.368/405, private. Hankey, i,110-112.
25. The conference was officially adjourned until 29 November 1910. Grey to Bertie, 25 June 1910, F.O.368/405, tel.13(commercial). Bertie to Grey, 29 June 1910, F.O.368/405, tel.18(commercial).
26. Grey to Bertie, 3 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, despt. no.211(comm-ercial). Kriege and Renault had also had the opportunity to work together at the 2nd Hague peace conference of 1907.
27. Bertie to Nicolson, 17 Nov.1910, F.O.368/405, private. Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407, despt.no.355 (commercial).

Paris armed with a carefully prepared draft agreement. He had, they thought, proceeded to misuse his position as chairman of one of the drafting committees in order to brush aside all opposition to it, and had pushed his proposals through before other delegates had had time to realize their import. They considered that Renault had been captured by Kriege, and that he had acted independently of, and at times in opposition to France's military and naval representatives.²⁸

To Bertie it seemed that the question dealt with at the conference had not been properly considered by any of the governments represented at it except that of Germany. The unwitting naval and military delegates of France had in his opinion accepted, and the politically inexperienced and unprepared British delegation had been unable to prevent, the drafting of a convention of far-reaching strategic importance. Moreover, since Renault had gone a good way towards committing the quai d'Orsay to the arrangement, it was difficult to see how Pichon could save France's face without denying him.²⁹

In London the War Office was clearly aware of the shortcomings of the British delegation. On 11 October a note was addressed from there to the Foreign Office pointing out that the British delegation greatly felt the need to have amongst their number someone versed in diplomatic usages, able to discern at once the real meaning of the methods employed by some foreign delegates

28. Ibid. Grey to Bertie, 3 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, despt.no.211 (commercial). Bertie described Kriege as having 'hypnotized M.Louis Renault who had the ear of the permanent officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs'. Bertie to Nicolson, 17 Nov.1910. ibid.

29. Annual Report for France, 1910, op.cit. Bertie to Grey, 16 Nov.1910, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

to achieve their ends, and with a good knowledge and command of the French language.³⁰ But Grey had already acted in this sense. 'Will you add one more to your services to your country', he asked Bertie on 5 October, 'by being chief delegate at the approaching Aerial Conference at Paris?' Bertie was glad to accept. He would endeavour to do what he could, he told Grey, 'to save us from our flying friends'.³¹

By the time of his appointment Bertie had already become involved in talks with the Quai d'Orsay about the future of the conference. On 29 July Grey had forwarded to him a memorandum setting forth the British government's views on the draft convention, and instructions to try to gain French support for them. The memorandum repeated several of the criticisms of the proposed convention that had already been made in the defence committee, and emphasized that since the only assured use to which airships and aeroplanes could be put was for war purposes, it was supremely important to consider the bearing of the arrangement on the rights and duties of belligerents and neutrals. The principle of the freedom of the air, it claimed, ignored 'the elementary right of the state to take each and every measure which it considers necessary for self-preservation, and only considers this right as if it were a privilege'. The effect of this would be to expose a state to constant pressure to withdraw its reservation. Moreover, in the present experimental stage of aerial navigation, the government thought it premature for any nation to agree to regulations and restrictions which could fetter its sovereign rights to make regulations affecting its security, and duties as a neutral.

30. War Office to Foreign Office, 11 Oct. 1910, F.O.368/406.

31. Grey to Bertie, 5 Oct. 1910, Bertie MSS., F.O.800/52.

It would, the memorandum concluded, be better for these reasons if the proposed convention were confined to dealing with technical matters of less political importance.³²

Pichon's absence from Paris throughout August and much of September prevented Bertie from making any direct representations to the foreign minister on this subject. He was, however, able to see Georges Louis, who though now ambassador at St. Petersburg, had returned to temporarily take charge of the quai d'Orsay. On 7 August Bertie repeated to him the criticisms of the draft convention made in the Foreign Office memorandum, and expressed his hope that the French would concur in Britain's views.³³ Bertie decided also to mention the matter to Fallières, whom he met at Rambouillet on 11 August. He gave to the president a copy of the memorandum, and he in turn promised to show it to Pichon and Briand, whom he was due to meet some two days later.³⁴ It was, nevertheless, another month before Bertie received a formal French reply, and then he obtained it not from Pichon, but from Louis. The foreign minister had paid a fleeting visit to Paris on 14 September, only to disappear into the country again on the following day. According to Louis, he had been left with instructions to tell Bertie that Pichon considered Anglo-French differences to be more apparent than real, and to be susceptible to an arrangement. In order to accomplish this, Louis told Bertie that Pichon had suggested that the British government should depute two or more delegates to have discussions with Renault and a representative of the quai d'Orsay.³⁵

32. F.O. memorandum enclosed in Grey to Bertie, 29 July 1910, F.O.368/405, despt.no.153 (commercial).

33. Bertie to Grey, 7 Aug.1910, F.O.368/405, despt.no.206 (commercial)

34. Bertie to Grey, 11 Aug.1910, F.O.368/406, despt.no.238 (commercial).

35. Bertie to Grey, 15 Sept. 1910, F.O.368/406, despt.no.268 (commercial).

Bertie did not share Pichon's optimism. The impression which he derived from Louis was that the French were so intoxicated by their own pre-eminence in aerial navigation that any experts who were sent to Paris would not succeed in persuading them that the German proposals were dangerous.³⁶ This point was put by Bertie to General Brun, the minister of war, and to Pichon. The latter admitted to Bertie on 14 October that there was a good deal of enthusiasm in France on account of the performance of French aircraft, but he assured him that they had no intention of risking their interests. Indeed, he told Bertie that he had discussed the matter with Fallières, and the French government had decided not to separate themselves from Britain over those questions hitherto at issue between the two delegations.³⁷

When Pichon's assurances were not matched by the actions of his officials, Bertie began to suspect that the latter were playing a subterranean role. Pichon himself revealed to Bertie on 10 November that Gavarry, the directeur in charge of the conference, had brought papers for his signature whose substance contradicted his previous assurances. This, and the negative attitude assumed by Renault towards the British, led Bertie to conclude that some of the officials of the quai d'Orsay had policies of their own. They appeared, he asserted, to take advantage of any opportunities which offered themselves for undermining the minister's intentions. Such a proceeding, he boasted to Grey, 'would never be permitted in England or even attempted'. Even Louis, whom Bertie considered to be much superior to most French officials, seemed not to be above suspicion. His statement of 15 September, Bertie assumed,

36. Bertie to Grey, 19 Sept. 1910, F.O. 368/406, private.

37. Bertie to Grey, 13 Oct. and 14 Oct. 1910, F.O. 368/406, despt. nos. 296 and 300 (commercial). General Brun was French minister of war from 1909 until 1911.

was 'a message from M.Pichon much diluted by water poured into it under the inspiration of M.Renault'. Louis, he thought, 'could not resist the temptation to keep a door open for a possible retreat from the assurances' Pichon had directed him to give.³⁸

At the end of October Bertie was requested by Grey to arrange for a meeting such as Louis had proposed on 15 September.³⁹ The object of this was to gain French agreement to the amendment and reconsideration of certain articles of the draft convention, and the omission of chapters III and VI, which dealt with the admission of foreign airships, and the applications of the convention to belligerents and neutrals. Since this was likely to meet with strong opposition from Renault, the British delegates were instructed that they would possibly have to be prepared with proposals which would retain the existing chapters, but modify their contents so as to eliminate their most objectionable features. Grey also considered playing upon the existing divisions within the French delegation, and separating Renault from his colleagues. To that end Bertie was requested to arrange an early meeting between the British naval and military delegates and the French naval and military authorities, and to endeavour personally to win over the ministers of war, marine, and foreign affairs to the British position. Besides this he suggested that Bertie might communicate with the Russian and Austro-Hungarian embassies, as their delegates had displayed views similar to those of the British government. Thus during the next month Bertie sought allies both within the

38. Bertie to Nicolson, 11 Nov.1910; Bertie to Grey, 10 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407, private. Pichon admitted to Bertie in December that Gavarry, who had persisted in his opposition to British views, was 'a very stupid fellow'. Bertie to Nicolson, 2 Dec.1910, F.O.368/405, private.

39. Grey to Bertie, 31 Oct.1910, F.O.368/406, tel.23 (commercial)

French government and amongst the representatives of the powers in Paris.⁴⁰

The meeting which Bertie arranged with Renault was not very productive. It took place at the embassy on 7 November, and was attended by the other British delegates as well as by representatives of the French ministries of war and marine. From the start Renault assumed an uncompromising stance. He rejected the British proposal to omit chapter III from the convention, and insisted that for the continental powers an agreement on the freedom of the air was essential in order to cover the frequent cases of airships straying across frontiers. Moreover, he predicted that if the present conference were wrecked another would be summoned at Berlin which would be less congenial to the British.

Where the draft convention was concerned, Renault adopted a very personal attitude, and insisted that he was acting as the president of the conference. Indeed, he was unable to give Bertie Pichon's views on the British memorandum of 29 July, even though he was supposedly the French delegate at the conference. Captain Maurice Hankey, who was a member of the British delegation, later claimed that the discussion between Bertie and Renault was one of the most amusing that he had ever witnessed. Much to the pleasure of the others who were present, Bertie proceeded to chaff Renault over whether he was addressing a representative of the quai d'Orsay or a distinguished lawyer, who 'could not persuade himself to abandon the infant to which he had given birth'.

Bertie assumed from the countenances of the French naval and military representatives that they were not always in agreement

40. Nicolson to Grey, 3 Nov.1910; Grey to the British delegates at the conference, 3 Nov.1910; Grey to Bertie, 5 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, despt.no.211 (commercial).

with their colleagues.⁴¹ Certainly Vice Admiral Lapeyrère, the minister of marine, who visited Bertie that evening, was not anxious to proceed with the matter in a hurry. The ministers for war and foreign affairs, whom Bertie met on 10 November displayed a hardly less accommodating spirit. Brun was placed in an awkward position by the fact that his staff had accepted the principles, but not yet the details of the draft convention. Pichon felt able to repeat his previous assurances that he wished to act in accord with the British government. Ignorance, however, of what had passed between Renault and Bertie, compelled him to ask the British ambassador for a written statement of Britain's objections to the draft convention. For his part Bertie suggested to Pichon that he should discuss the several points which had been raised with the ministers of war and marine rather than with Renault. At the same time, he urged Brun and Lapeyrère to meet with Pichon on this matter.⁴²

When Bertie next spoke with Pichon on the subject of the conference he found that while Pichon was still at heart with Britain, Renault had not failed to have some effect upon him. Pichon was, Bertie thought, in a 'wobbly state'. What particularly perturbed him were France's relations with Germany, which might now be disturbed by France appearing to change course at the conference in opposition to Germany. France had, after all, convoked the conference, and in Pichon's opinion the policy subsequently pursued by Renault had left her in a delicate position.

41. Bertie to Grey, 31 Oct.1910, F.O.368/406, tel.32 (Commercial). Bertie to Grey, 7 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, tel.34 and despt.no.326 (commercial). Hankey, pp.112-113. Maurice Hankey had since 1908 been assistant secretary to the C.I.D.

42. Bertie to Grey, 10 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, tel.38 and despt. no.330 (commercial). Vice Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère was French minister of marine from 1909 until 1911.

Yet the overall picture, which Bertie described to Grey on 16 November, was not an unfavourable one. He wrote:

We have for us wholeheartedly the Minister of Marine; in a great measure the Minister for War himself and to a certain degree his department, and Pichon himself wholly but his officials and naturally Renault against us. Pichon is inclined to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds. He wants to act with us which will also be acting for the interests of France and to do so without offending Germany. He will endeavour to find arguments to this end.

Bertie proposed to Grey that other governments might be persuaded to object at Paris to the draft convention 'so as to impress on him (Pichon) that others besides themselves, Russia and Switzerland, dislike the German programme'.⁴³ But within the Foreign Office there was an inclination towards the idea of retaining the existing chapters of the draft convention in a modified form. Such a course, it was felt, might be more acceptable to some of the minor powers.⁴⁴ Bertie, however, rejected the idea of a 'retreat before a fight from our first entrenchment to our second lines'. It would be neither seemly nor consistent in his view for Britain, who had sought the assistance of other states, to make terms behind their backs with the French government. Both Nicolson and Grey were prepared to give Bertie a free hand in this matter. Indeed Grey considered Bertie's conduct to have been most excellent.⁴⁵ In a private letter of 19 November, in which he congratulated Bertie upon his diplomacy, Grey observed: 'You seem to be taking to some extent,

43. Ibid. Bertie to Grey, 16 Nov.1910, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. Bertie to Grey, 17 Nov.1910, F.O.365/405, private.

44. Minutes on Lord Acton to Grey, 9 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406 tel.23 (commercial). Grey to Bertie, 11 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, tel.29 (commercial).

45. Bertie to Grey, 17 Nov.1910, F.O.368/405, private. Bertie to Grey, 12 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407, tel.40 (commercial). Bertie to Grey, 22 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407, despt.no.348 (commercial). Nicolson to Bertie, 25 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407, private.

and very successfully, the place of Pichon as French Minister for Foreign Affairs in this business'.⁴⁷

The discussions which Bertie had helped to initiate between Brun, Lapeyrère, and Pichon did not result in an early agreement upon the course which the French government intended to pursue. On 17 November Pichon informed Bertie that he had decided to delay the re-assembly of the conference. Despite Pichon's assurances to the contrary this proved to be the end of the conference. To Nicolson this seemed like a desirable solution to the problems involved. Bertie, however, was not in favour of an indefinite adjournment of an international agreement on aerial navigation. When Pichon had first mooted the idea of an adjournment, Bertie had expressed his fear that this might lead the German government to make independent arrangements with the smaller powers, and this, he thought, would be detrimental to British interests. He was particularly worried about the possibility of an accord on this matter between Germany and the Netherlands.⁴⁸

As it was not immediately apparent that the conference would not meet again, Bertie continued to concentrate his attention upon securing French support for British policies. There were still French officials for whom Renault's proposals remained attractive. Pichon promised Bertie on 20 November that he would not default from his assurances, but this did not prevent Paul Cambon from warning Nicolson that France would have to reach an agreement with Germany and might not be able to await a conference decision.

46. Minute by Grey on Bertie to Grey, 10 Nov.1910, F.O.368/406, despt.no.330(commercial)

47. Grey to Bertie, 19 Nov.1910, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

48. Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov.1910, ibid. Bertie to Grey, 16 Nov. 1910, F.O.368/407, tel.45 (commercial).

Any day, he said, some frontier incident might arise owing to the not infrequent passage by German airships into France.⁴⁹ Bertie considered that Paul Cambon was doing no more than expressing the opinion of his brother Jules, and that of the Quai d'Orsay as interpreted by Renault and Gavarry. Personally he was heartened by a report from the ministry of war that the French military authorities entirely concurred in Britain's views. General Laffor, the French chief of staff, told Bertie that Renault had ignored the French military delegates at the conference, and that the proper course now was to substitute something quite innocuous in the place of the objectionable provisions of the draft convention.⁵⁰

Bertie also had to reckon with independently minded colleagues. In one instance, Colonel MacDonogh, the British military delegate, attempted a little private diplomacy. On 19 November he asked Bertie what he thought of a suggestion, which he claimed, had been made by Robert Craigie, a Foreign Office clerk, that he should write to the chief of staff of the Danish army, whom he knew well, in order to further the British case. This met with Bertie's opposition. Scornful of Craigie's presumption, he suggested to Tyrrell that some treatment might be applied to his head that 'may reduce the swelling'. 'I believe', he added, 'that dry shampooing is considered beneficial in some cases of head affection'.⁵¹ Subsequent investigations, however, revealed that the idea was really that of MacDonogh himself, and Craigie escaped with a warning from Tyrrell against expressing

49. Bertie to Grey, 20 Nov. 1910, F.O. 368/407, despt. nos. 345 and 346 (commercial). Bertie to Nicolson, 21 Nov. 1910, F.O. 368/407, private. Nicolson to Bertie, Nov. 1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/165.

50. Bertie to Nicolson, 27 Nov. 1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/165.

51. When Bridgeman lent his support to MacDonogh's initiative Bertie observed to Tyrrell: 'The young are too confident in their fitness as tails to waggle the dogs'. Bertie to Tyrrell, 20 Nov. 1910, and 27 Nov. 1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/174. Colonel George M. MacDonogh was to become director of military intelligence in 1916.

personal opinions.⁵²

More important than Craigie's supposed impertinence in determining Bertie's attitude towards MacDonogh's plan was the fact that he believed the Danish government to have been already 'acquired' by Germany. Any written arguments which went beyond those included in the Foreign Office memorandum of 29 July would, he argued, have to point out the danger from Germany in order to have any chance of success. Yet such statements would, he thought, simply be communicated by the Danes to the Germans.⁵³ Nevertheless, MacDonogh proceeded with his plans, and even won some support from Nicolson.⁵⁴ Only after a further protest from Bertie did Nicolson succeed in preventing any inadvertent action at Copenhagen.⁵⁵

All Bertie's diplomacy and the feverish attempts of the British government to whip up the support of other powers were based upon the supposition that the conference was soon going to re-assemble. Yet despite Pichon's denial that there was any truth in a report that the conference was not to meet for a long period, Bertie had his doubts about the foreign minister's intentions.⁵⁶ In January 1911 Pichon suggested that early February might be a suitable time for the reassembly of the

52. Tyrrell to Bertie, 23 Nov.1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

53. Bertie to Tyrrell, 30 Nov.1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174. Bertie to Nicolson, 30 Nov.1910, F.O.365/405, private.

54. Nicolson to Bertie, 25 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407, private.

MacDonogh to Law, 28 Nov.1910, F.O.368/407.

55. Bertie to Tyrrell, 30 Nov.1910; Nicolson to Bertie, 5 Dec. 1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174. Bertie to Nicolson, 30 Nov. 1910, private, op.cit.

56. The British minister at Christiania reported to the Foreign Office on 3 December that he had learned from the Norwegian government that the French had stated that the conference was to be postponed for a considerable time and that they were 'not without fears that this is equivalent to its funeral'. Winfield to Grey, 3 Dec.1910, F.O.368/407, tel.4 (commercial). Bertie to Grey, 5 Dec.1910, F.O.368/407, tel.56 (commercial). Bertie to Nicolson, 5 Dec.1910, F.O.368/405, private.

conference, but Bertie predicted that this meant late February.⁵⁷ After the resignation of Briand and his government on 27 February, Bertie seems to have abandoned any belief that he might have had in the conference one day reconvening. The news, which he received from the Swiss minister at Paris, that the French government intended to issue decrees governing air traffic across France which were in accordance with British views, led Bertie to conclude that the French believed themselves to have been compromised by Renault and desired to 'avoid a discussion with Germany outside or inside the now sleeping conference'. Even the officials of the quai d'Orsay who were 'solidaire' with Renault, would not in Bertie's opinion like the conference to resume because of the discredit which it would bring to the French delegate for his past actions. Moreover, there were by then a 'goodly array of states' who had been persuaded to adopt Britain's views. Bertie could count nine in all, against Germany's Six supporters. With such a majority, he did not think that Germany would want to face a conference.⁵⁸

The negotiations concerning the conference could in most respects be counted as a success for Britain. Although no convention was signed on the technical matters upon which the British government would have been pleased to have had an agreement, any commitment either on Britain's part, or on that of the other European powers to the principle of the freedom of the air had been avoided. Bertie had been recruited to check international agreement on legislation which was regarded as injurious to British interests, and in that he had succeeded. Moreover, his fear that Germany might conclude separate arrangements with her neighbours did not materialize. His own personal achievement was that of

57. Davidson to Bertie, 10 Jan. 1911; Bertie to Davidson, 14 Jan. 1911; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174.

58. Because Bertie did not wish to offend those governments that had come to support the British case, he rejected a suggestion made by Grey that in the event of the subject of the conference becoming active again, Britain should seek a preliminary agreement with France and Germany. Grey to Bertie, 4 April 1911; Bertie to Grey, 9 April 1911; Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

exposing to Pichon and his colleagues in the French cabinet the dangers inherent in what he considered to be a German sponsored draft convention. He had also helped to stiffen the foreign minister against Renault and his supporters in the Quai d'Orsay. In Bertie's own opinion, England had saved France from committing herself to a German scheme. It was a view from which Pichon did not dissent.⁵⁹

Where international politics were concerned Germany remained in Bertie's estimation the villain of the piece. He had, however, nothing that was novel to say about the efforts made by Grey in February and March 1911 to find a basis for an agreement with Berlin. Like Nicolson he was perturbed lest the British government should be out-maneuvred by Germany in what he regarded as an attempt by her to split the entente. In a letter to Hardinge of 16 March 1911 he ruminated:

I hope that the anxiety of a portion of the Cabinet to please Germany will not lead to our being roulés as the Russians have been. The whole object of the Germans is to sow discord between us and the Russians and between the French and us. It is a renewal of the old Bismarckian game.⁶⁰

To Nicolson Bertie reiterated his view that Britain had better continue to outbuild Germany in warships. 'Our hope', he observed on 15 March, 'must be that heavy taxation will sooner be felt and resented in Germany than in the United Kingdom'. There was, he thought, some chance of this hope being fulfilled since the cost of armaments in the latter country fell 'almost entirely on the non-grumbling classes'.⁶¹

Bertie presented the same resolute front to the Baron Ferdinand von Stumm, whom he met in June at Bagnoles-de-l'Orne. While

59. Bertie to Grey, 24 Nov. 1910, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

60. Bertie to Hardinge, 16 March 1911, Hardinge MSS., 92.

61. Bertie to Nicolson, 15 March 1911, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186.

he conceded that an all-round reduction in expenditure would be welcome, he dismissed the proponents in England of a naval agreement as a 'very noisy party'. They had not, he contended, so far suggested how practically a reduction in armaments was to be arranged with Germany 'in view of the facts - so long as they remained facts - that the people of England are determined to maintain naval supremacy'. In this situation Bertie could see no room for an agreement. He was certain he told Stumm of one thing: that no state in Europe had hitherto succeeded in having the strongest army and most powerful navy, and it was doubtful whether any country, no matter how rich, could bear the strain.⁶²

Bertie had strong doubts as to what would be the ultimate effect of a naval agreement with Germany even if it could be achieved. It might, he thought, positively worsen the situation. 'Any political or armaments agreement made with Germany', he wrote to Nicolson, 'would be observed by us in spirit as well as letter, but in neither by the Germans'. The result, he predicted, would be that dissatisfaction in Britain with Germany's conduct would produce more ill-will than already existed. Clearly in Bertie's opinion there was little that Grey could do to better the existing situation. 'We ought to be thankful', he observed, 'that Germany annexed Alsace and Lorraine as that act made a combination between Germany and France against us impossible'. The advantage that Britain derived from the entente with France remained in his estimation the fact that it removed the possibility of Britain having to fight both France and Germany together. 'Our reconciliation and Entente with France', he declared, 'have saved us from

62. The Baron Ferdinand von Stumm was a German industrialist, who held no official position in 1911. Bertie had known him two decades before when he had been the councillor at the German embassy at London. Bertie to Nicolson, 23 June 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

the danger of a French attack if we have war with Germany and there is now no probability of an Anglo-French war to give Germany her opportunity to attack us'.⁶³

Bertie continued to oppose the making of any very considerable concessions to Germany outside of Europe. In Persia he hoped that the government would not cede before Germany's pretensions with regard to railways there, and he recommended to Nicolson that the Persians should be made to understand that if they made concessions to the Germans in the south, the British government would make their resentment sensibly felt. They should, he thought, be reminded of Britain's proximity to the Persian gulf as compared with Germany's distance from the area. As for an agreement on the Bagdad railway, which would also involve an arrangement with the Turks, Bertie made clear his opposition to any sacrifice of Britain's position in Kuwait. The Germans, he believed to be behind the Turkish refusal to recognize a British protectorate over the sheikdom, and he warned Nicolson against any concession such as would injure Britain's reputation there.⁶⁴

Despite his readiness to volunteer advice on how the Foreign Office should handle Britain's relations with Germany, Bertie appears to have exercised relatively little influence upon the efforts of Grey to reduce tension in Europe. The foreign secretary was already resolved to do nothing that would risk undermining the entente with France, and he seems not to have paid any great attention to the fears expressed by Bertie about German colonial expansion. But when German policies menaced France's security and interests, Bertie was well-placed to successfully intervene with his colleagues in London. The decision taken by the German government to once more challenge France's position in Morocco provided Bertie with just such a situation.

63. Bertie to Nicolson, 15 March 1911, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186.

64. Ibid. Bertie to Hardinge, 16 March 1911, op.cit.

Chapter VII.

The second Moroccan crisis.

Germany's intervention in Morocco during the summer of 1911 came as no surprise to Bertie. The declining fortunes of the Moorish sultan, the disputes between France and Spain over their rights and interests there, and the French proposal to send a punitive mission to Fez, had by April 1911 created a situation which Bertie believed the Germans would endeavour to exploit. He viewed the ensuing diplomatic conflict as a fresh attempt by Germany to extend her global influence at the expense of Britain and France. Again he urged the foreign secretary to take a firm stand against the German acquisition of a Moorish port, and once more he reminded his colleagues in London of the dangers involved in any substantial increase in Germany's territorial possessions in central Africa. Grey, however, was at times prepared to adopt a more conciliatory approach towards Germany than that advocated by Bertie, and during the course of July and August real differences emerged between them over the advice that should be offered to the French.

In a despatch of 31 January 1911 Bertie drew the attention of the Foreign Office to an article by Tardieu in Le Temps which protested that the 'Triple Alliance which went in for action was confronted by the Triple Entente which slumbered'.¹ Bertie suspected that Tardieu had personal reasons for this and other criticisms which he had recently made of Pichon's foreign policy. But his language also reflected the doubts felt by the

1. Bertie to Grey, 31 Jan. 1911, F.O. 371/1117, despt. no. 58.

French about the future of their foreign combinations.² The Potsdam interviews had again demonstrated that the Russians were prepared to treat separately with Berlin, and that there was little unity between Britain, France, and Russia in the Near and Middle East. Moreover, the British general election of December 1910 and the return of a government committed to parliamentary reform and other radical measures produced some nervousness in France.³ When on 18 January Briand spoke to Bertie about the need for the British and French governments to be more communicative with each other, he, like Pichon, also referred to the danger of England's influence on the continent being diminished as a result of her internal dissensions. Bertie thought that what he and other Frenchmen feared was that Britain's utility to France would be much impaired if Asquith's administration were replaced by another liberal one with an inclination towards coming to terms with Germany.⁴ Such were the circumstances that after Briand's resignation at the end of February, Paul Cambon warned Pichon that unless his successor were a man of experience, whose word carried some weight, 'la Triple Entente risque de s'éfriter'.⁵

2. Bertie was subsequently informed by Pichon that the attacks made by Tardieu in the press upon the government's foreign policy were due to his having been out of the secret service list. Of Tardieu Bertie wrote to Nicolson: 'He is or was poor and he had or has an expensive actress in tow'. Undated letter from Bertie to F.O., 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Bertie to Grey 3 March 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/167. Bertie to Nicolson, 6 April 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/348. For a fuller study of Tardieu's financial connexions and the reasons for his criticism of Pichon see: Rudolph Binion, Defeated Leaders: the political fate of Caillaux, Jouvenel and Tardieu (New York, 1960), pp.214-239.

3. The constitutional difficulties of 1910 and the background to the election of December are examined in Peter Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments (2 vols., London, 1968 and 1971), 1, 279-341.

4. Already in January 1910 Bertie had warned Hardinge about French anxiety over the political situation in Britain. Bertie to Hardinge, 12 Jan.1910; Bertie to Grey, 18 Jan.1911, and 2 Feb.1911; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

5. Bertie to Grey, 26 Feb. and 27 Feb.1911, F.O.371/1117, despt. nos.92 and 94. P.Cambon to Pichon, 28 Feb.1911, Correspondence II, 311-312. Nicolson shared similar fears to those of Cambon. He thought that the political situations in Britain and France would lead the Russians to lean 'towards the more conservative and apparently stabler central powers'. Nicolson to Hardinge, 2 March 1911, Hardinge MSS., 92.

Jean Cruppi, who was appointed foreign minister in the cabinet of Ernest Monis, possessed neither of the qualities desired by Cambon.⁶ Indeed, the strongest figures in the new government were Caillaux, who returned to the ministry of finance, Berteaux, the minister of war, and Delcassé, who became minister of marine. With the exception of the latter, whom he would have preferred to have seen at the Quai d'Orsay, Bertie had not previously had close contact with any of the new ministers.⁷ Those whom he received at the embassy on 3 and 4 March gave the customary assurances of loyalty towards the entente. It was not long, however, before the subject of the future of the Anglo-French relationship was raised anew by Cruppi.⁸

After having only recently been initiated into the mysteries of the entente, Cruppi was distressed to learn that Grey had told the Commons on 30 March that the extent of Britain's commitment to France was that 'expressed or implied in the Anglo-French convention'. The declaration was purposely worded in order to avoid giving the impression that the accord of 1904 might not 'be construed to have larger consequences than its strict letter'.⁹ But Cruppi was unimpressed by Grey's verbal niceties. Worried about the possible effects of Grey's words upon parliamentary opinion in France, he protested to Bertie that he would have preferred that there should have remained a suspicion that an understanding did exist for 'possible eventualities'.¹⁰

6. Bertie had expected that Pichon would remain foreign minister. Bertie to Grey, 25 Feb. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Jean Cruppi was at the Quai d'Orsay until June, when he became minister of justice in Caillaux's government. Ernest Monis was a political nonentity who disappeared from office after being injured in an aerial accident.

7. Bertie had had some dealings with Caillaux in 1909 in connexion with matters relating to Ottoman finance. At that time Clemenceau had indicated to Bertie that the minister of finance was unpopular with his colleagues. Bertie to Grey, 1 Feb. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51. Bertie to Grey, 5 Mar. 1909, B.D., vi, no.443. Henry Maurice Berteaux had been minister of war in the governments of Combes and Rouvier in 1904 and 1905.

8. Ibid. Grey to Bertie 16 March 1911, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

9. Question asked in the House of Commons, 30 March 1911; and Grey to Bertie, 10 April 1911; B.D., vii, nos.197 and 206.

10. Bertie to Grey, 9 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.205.

Bertie, however, could offer little comfort to him. When on 5 April he brought to Bertie the text of a declaration which he intended to make in the Senate, Bertie objected to it containing the assurance that both powers would remain friendly and united in all eventualities, and would give 'le moment venu une forme precise a leur entente'.¹¹ The effect of such words, Nicolson commented, would have been to give the impression that something very serious was impending, and that the two governments had come to a definite understanding.¹²

Bertie suspected that the line which the foreign minister was taking on this matter was not his own, but that of the Quai d'Orsay, instilled in him by Maurice Herbette, his chef de cabinet. He had been led to believe, Bertie thought, that there was an inclination in Britain towards Germany.¹³ Indeed, in February the international situation had prompted Pichon and his officials to think in terms of tightening their entente with England through a resumption of the military conversations which had languished since 1908.¹⁴ On 8 April General Foch put it to Colonel Fairholme, the British military attaché at Paris, that there was a need for both a military understanding with regard to the action to be taken by the British and French armies in a war with Germany, and a political understanding which would state exactly what the two governments were prepared to concede and resist in the many questions of the moment.¹⁵

11. Bertie to Grey, 5 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.200.

12. Nicolson to Bertie, 6 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.202. Grey congratulated Bertie for having acted promptly on his own initiative. Grey to Bertie, 8 April 1911, Bertie MSS., A., F.O.800/166.

13. Maurice Herbette, the former head of the communications bureau of the Quai d'Orsay was the chef de cabinet of Cruppi and his successor. Bertie to Grey, 9 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.205.

14. Procès-verbal d'une conference tenue chez M.le President de la Republique, 13 Feb.1911, D.D.F.2, xiii, no.152.

15. Colonel W.E.Fairholme was military attaché at Paris from 1909 until 1912 General F.Foch was in 1911 Commandant of the French staff college. Fairholme to Bertie, 8 April 1911 enclosed in Bertie to Grey, 9 April 1911, B.D., vi, no.460.

The views expressed by Foch were in Bertie's opinion those held by officers and many political people in France. Indeed on 12 April Cruppi put it to him that in view of the present political situation in Europe, it 'behoved the French and British Governments to carry matters further as regards possible co-operation in certain eventualities than had hitherto been done'. What Cruppi desired, Bertie reported, was not a formal convention, but an understanding which would define what joint action the two powers should take in case they had to co-operate in a conflict. He had, Bertie observed to Grey, probably not delved very deeply into the subject of the military conversations, and had raised the question 'theoretically' rather than 'practically'.¹⁶ Yet although Grey expected to be 'asked something', and chose this occasion to formally inform Asquith of the military conversations, over a month passed before Cruppi returned to the subject.¹⁷ By then the troubles which were already stirring in Morocco had taken a more serious turn.

Monis's government had not long been in office before they were forced to examine the implications for France of a widespread tribal revolt in Morocco against the régime of Mulai Hafid. When in April the rebel forces appeared to menace the sultan's capital at Fez, they had to decide whether the circumstances warranted their attempting to save by military means the European colony there. Such a move could hardly be contemplated without taking into account the likely reaction of Spain.¹⁸ Already Spanish fears that the

16. Bertie to Grey, 13 April 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Bertie to Grey, 13 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.207.

17. Grey of Fallodon, i, 94.

18. French forces had been engaged in the pacification of the Chaouya region of Morocco since 1907. Barlow, pp.169-206.

French were bent upon extending their dominion throughout the sultan's territories had resulted in friction between their officials, and squabbles between their governments over Moroccan finance, and the appointment of military advisers.¹⁹ Moreover, the French suspected that the Germans were meddling at Madrid in order to promote a misunderstanding between France and Spain.²⁰ Thus while the situation in Morocco presented Cruppi and his colleagues with the opportunity to consolidate France's grasp upon the country, it also raised the prospect of a quarrel with Spain of which the Germans might seek to take advantage.²¹

Within the British Foreign Office there was a tendency to regard the French as having acted in a rather tactless fashion towards Spain. They had since 1906 shown scant respect for British interests in Morocco, and there seemed to be some justice in the Spanish claims that the French were disregarding their rights.²² Moreover, a march on Fez such as Cambon suggested to Nicolson on 4 April was not greeted with any enthusiasm in London. 'What the French contemplate doing is not wise', Grey minuted, 'but we cannot under our agreement interfere'. Initially France was offered no more than a very restrained support for her policy in

19. De Bunsen to Grey, 11 Feb. 1911, and 17 March 1911; F.O.371/1153, despt.no.18 and tel.2. Villa Urrutia to Grey, 20 March 1911, F.O.371/1153.

20. Bertie to Grey, 13 April, 26 April and 27 April 1911; B.D., vii, nos.207, 220 and 224. Bertie to Grey, 16 April 1911, F.O.371/1157, tel.35. Nicolson to Buchanan, 10 May 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/348.

21. Nicolson to Bertie, 4 April 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. De Bunsen to Nicolson, 25 March 1911; Nicolson to Cartwright, (?) May 1911; Carnock MSS., F.O.800/348.

22. Indeed the French ambassador at Madrid admitted to his British colleague in November 1910 that his government had not fairly applied the provisions of the accord of October 1904. 'It had', he claimed, 'been almost forgotten that France had recognised the existence of a Spanish sphere of influence at all'. DeBunsen to Nicolson, 25 Nov. 1910, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/334. Nicolson to Lister, 5 April 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/341. Hardinge to Lister, 3 May 1910; Hardinge to de Bunsen, 5 May 1910; Hardinge MSS., 21. Minutes by Villiers and Eyre Crowe on Villa Urrutia to Grey, 20 March 1911, op.cit. Grey to Bertie, 27 March 1911, F.O.371/1153, tel.49. Minutes on note communicated by P.Cambon, 14 March 1911; Grey to Bertie, 14 March; 16 March and 22 March 1911; Nicolson to Bertie, 6 April 1911; B.D., vii, nos.192, 193, 195, 196 and 202.

Morocco.²³

Bertie had few doubts about the dangers involved in further French entanglement in the domestic affairs of Morocco, and on 8 and 12 April he warned Cruppi that the Germans might try to profit from it.²⁴ But he also cautioned Perez Caballero, who was now Spanish ambassador at Paris, against pressing for the publication of the secret Franco-Spanish convention on Morocco. That, he judged, would only invite German criticism. When his Spanish colleague protested that the Germans had in the past been ready to support Spain, he advised him that it was 'not customary for the Germans to do things gratis'. Germany, he explained, had been credited with a longing for something on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and Spain had 'some nice little islands', which, but for her agreements with France and Britain, would not be so secure. That Germany had constructed a large navy and now required coaling stations remained Bertie's view.²⁵ According to Izvolsky, who had recently been appointed Russian ambassador at Paris, Bertie was convinced that Germany was only waiting for a favourable opportunity to declare the Algeciras act invalid 'in order to occupy one or two ports, among them Mogador'.²⁶ He rightly predicted that the German press would create a public opinion in Germany which would require the government there to go further than it intended. In his estimation the Germans could hardly afford to neglect the chance that would be offered to them by a French expedition to the interior of Morocco.²⁷ At the end of April he told Count Szécsen, the

23. Nicolson to Bertie, 6 April 1911, *ibid.* Nicolson to Grey 4 April 1911, and minute by Grey, F.O.371/1154. Nicolson to de Bunsen. 5 April 1911, *Carnock MSS.*, F.O.800/348. Nicolson to Bertie, 11 May 1911, *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/180. Grey to de Bunsen, 15 April and 26 April 1911, *B.D.*, vii, nos.209 and 221.

24. Bertie to Grey, 9 April and 13 April 1911, *B.D.*, vii, nos.204 and 207.

25. Bertie to Nicolson, 5 April 1911, *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/160.

26. B.de Siebert, *Entente Diplomacy and the World. Matrix of the history of Europe.* (London, 1921, edited by A.Schreiner), p.582.

27. Bertie to Grey, 29 April 1911, *B.D.*, vii, no.236.

Austrian ambassador to France:

If I were a German I would be glad to see a state of affairs which would enable me to hope that the Moroccan question might be re-opened with a possible opportunity to get something for Germany, and I quite understand the anxiety of the Pan-Germanic Press that there should be dissensions between Spain and France.²⁸

Although Bertie accepted that the French decision to despatch an expeditionary column to Fez was the result of a genuine desire on their part to avoid the dangers posed by an anti-foreign movement in Morocco, he like Nicolson feared that it might be very difficult for the French to effect a swift withdrawal. The present government, he contended, was bitterly opposed in many quarters and had powerful interests hostile to it because of its radical socialist complexion, and its internal policies. It would, he claimed, be attacked vehemently if it were to abandon the sultan. Yet, if a garrison were maintained for long at Fez, that, he believed, would lead to Spanish and German objections, and the sort of situation for which the French were not prepared.²⁹ He warned Cruppi that French support of Mulai Hafid might make a withdrawal from Fez difficult, and Germany 'would demand her price for non-intervention'.³⁰

28. Ibid. Nikolaus Count Szecsen von Temerin succeeded Khevenhüller as Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Paris in 1911. He had formerly been Austria's ambassador to the Vatican. Bertie left him with the impression that he was afraid that France and Germany would eventually come to an understanding by which Germany would in return for securing a Moroccan port disinterest herself in Morocco. Szecsen to MA., 29 April 1911, "O-U.iii,no.2529.

29. On Bertie one historian has commented that he 'alone of the diplomats at Paris, did Cruppi the honour of believing him'. Barlow, p.192. Bertie to Grey, 24 April 1911, F.O.371/1154, despt. no.184. Bertie to Grey, 26 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.220. Bertie to Grey, 27 April 1911, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. Bertie admitted that the colonial party were anxious that the French should go to Fez and remain there, but he insisted that the French chamber did not want it. Bertie to de Bunsen, 20 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Nicolson to Bertie, 11 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Nicolson, 19 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

30. Bertie to de Bunsen, 13 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

There was considerable truth in Bertie's projections.

While the German government did not raise serious objections to the expedition to Fez, Kiderlen-Wächter warned Jules Cambon on 28 April that an indefinitely prolonged occupation of the city would mean the end of the Algeciras act, and Germany would 'resume her entire liberty of action'.³¹ Moreover, Spain was far from ready to acquiesce in the latest French move. The Spanish government claimed that the independence and integrity of Morocco had been threatened and that therefore their convention with France of October 1904 should come into operation. If the French were to oppose Spain acting on the basis on the convention, then, Perez Caballero warned Cruppi, ~~he~~ would denounce it, and appeal to 'another Power'.³²

Cruppi complained bitterly to Bertie about Spain's conduct. The Germans, he suspected, were playing on Spanish susceptibilities in the hope that they would occupy a portion of Morocco, and allow Germany to claim that the Algeciras act was defunct.³³ But, while Grey urged restraint upon Madrid, he at the same time encouraged the French to be conciliatory towards the Spanish government and to find a way of reassuring them that the situation in Morocco would not be altered to their disadvantage.³⁴ Bertie was more sympathetic towards Cruppi, and he placed some of the blame for the poor state of relations between France and Spain

31. Goschen to Grey, 28 April 1911; Bertie to Grey, 29 April 1911; B.D., vii, nos.227 and 232. According to a report which Nicolson had received from the Spanish embassy at London. Kiderlen-Wächter had told the Spanish ambassador at Berlin that he was going to Kissingen for a six weeks cure, and he was sure that by the end of six weeks a 'very serious situation' would have developed which would necessitate his presence in Berlin. Nicolson to Bertie, 11 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

32. According to the terms of the Franco-Spanish convention Spain was to take no action in her sphere for fifteen years without consulting France. Bertie to Grey, 29 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.233.

33. Bertie to Grey, 27 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.224. Bertie to Grey, 7 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Bertie to Grey, 11 May 1911, F.O.371/1159, tel.55.

34. Grey to Bertie, 27 March 1911, F.O.371/3153, tel.49. Grey to de Bunsen, 1 May 1911; Nicolson to Goschen, 1 May 1911; Grey to Bertie, 3 May, 5 May and 9 May 1911; B.D., vii, nos.238, 240, 243, 252 and 256.

on the attitude of Perez Caballero. The Spaniards had already occupied the heights above Ceuta, and rumour had it that they intended to send their forces to Tetuan if the French entered Fez. On 13 February Bertie wrote privately to de Bunsen that Cruppi had said that France could not quietly admit such action, and that he supposed it would not suit England 'to have opposite Gibraltar the Spaniards and behind them the Germans'.³⁵ The objection was hardly a sound one though, for as de Bunsen explained to Nicolson, Spain had for centuries held Ceuta, which was the most important strategic point opposite to Gibraltar.³⁶

The prospect of Spain, with Germany's encouragement, taking precipitate action in Morocco was not all that worried Cruppi. The recent collapse of negotiations between the Porte and a French company for the granting of a railway concession in Anatolia was regarded in France as evidence of the extent to which Germany's influence was increasing in Turkey.³⁷ Thus when Bertie met Cruppi on 13 May he found that he was 'generally alarmed all round'. He warned Bertie that the only way to combat German predominance at Constantinople was through an Anglo-French understanding for joint action in Turkish affairs. As Bertie had been engaged since the previous autumn in a fruitless endeavour to effect a fusion between the National Bank and the Ottoman Bank in the interests of Anglo-French co-operation, he took this opportunity to explain

35. Bertie to Grey, 25 April 1911, tel., Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. Bertie to Grey, 28 April 1911, B.D., vii, no.225. Bertie to de Bunsen, 13 May 1911; Bertie to Nicolson, 11 June 1911; de Bunsen to Bertie, 14 May and 19 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

36. De Bunsen to Nicolson, 19 May 1911, F.O.371/1157, private.

37. Poidevin, pp.624-625. The French government were also concerned that Britain might make a separate agreement with Germany over the Bagdad railway. Bertie to Grey, 14 May 1911, B.D., X, pt.2, no.28.

to Cruppi the difficulties which he had already encountered with French financial institutions. He did, however, ask Nicolson if the Foreign Office 'could not utilize Cruppi's mood for a combination of politics and finance in an Anglo-French Agreement for joint action to enable France and England to make some stand against Marschall von Bieberstein'?³⁸

Cruppi also warned Bertie that Germany was seeking to profit from her intrigues, and England was so occupied by her 'unfortunate internal difficulties that Germany may think she is a "quantité négligeable"'. If only the understanding between England, France, and Russia could be made more 'active and evident', he believed the danger of Germany menacing the European peace would be averted. Bertie suspected that what the French government were hankering after was 'something more visible to Germany and useful to France than the existing Entente'.³⁹ To Nicolson he wrote on 14 May that the French did not feel sure how far they could rely on their understanding with Britain if Germany became threatening or bluffed. Such a feeling, he observed, was useful to Britain as security against the French 'committing imprudences' in their discussions with the Germans, but they might, he contended, 'if hard pressed give us away in a question important to British and not to French interests'. As yet uncertain about what arrangements might have been made as the result of the Anglo-French military conversations, he proposed that everything naval and

38. Nicolson to Bertie, 11 May 1911; Bertie to Nicolson, 14 May 1911 (part of this letter is published as B.D., vii, no.269), Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Grey, 14 May 1911, ibid. Adolf, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein was German ambassador at Constantinople from 1897 until 1912. In 1912 he was appointed ambassador at London, but he died before taking up this post.

39. Bertie to Nicolson, 14 May 1911, ibid. Cruppi was also worried about Russia's relations with Germany. He told Bertie on 27 May: 'What he would like would be an understanding between the French and British Governments to keep Russia in line with them'. Bertie to Grey, 28 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177.

military should be 'arranged unofficially to meet the contingency of British and French forces having to act together'.⁴⁰

Bertie's letter was seen by Asquith and Grey and provoked a discussion between them with regard to extending the entente. But Nicolson, who shared Bertie's views on this matter, doubted if the government would find it possible to go as far as the French desired.⁴¹ Indeed, the only positive response from London to Cruppi's appeal was that Bertie was instructed to tell him that the British government shared her desire 'for a financial and general understanding between the two powers ~~respecting~~ Turkish affairs'.⁴² When Grey met Metternich on 18 May he went no further than to remind him with reference to Morocco that 'some of us were bound by Treaty engagements which would of course come into operation if difficulties arose'.⁴³ This may have partly satisfied Nicolson's hopes that Britain should not appear to waver in her support of France. He had written to Bertie on 11 May that he thought the Germans were calculating that once France had 'plunged herself up to the neck in Moorish affairs', they would step in and demand their price.⁴⁴ Bertie echoed this view in a letter to de Bunsen of 24 May. The Spaniards, he claimed, had foolishly allowed themselves to be exploited by the Germans, and now, having made as 'much bad blood as possible' the Germans had withdrawn. If, however, an opportune moment arrived, they would, he asserted, ask for payment.⁴⁵

40. Bertie to Nicolson, 14 May 1911, ibid.

41. Nicolson to Bertie, 17 May 1911, B.D., vii, no.275.

42. Grey to Bertie, 25 May 1911, F.O.371/1240, despt.no.516.

43. Grey to Goschen, 18 May 1911, B.D., vii, no.278.

44. Nicolson to Bertie, 11 May 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/180 (published) in part as B.D., vii, no.263.

45. Bertie to de Bunsen, 20 May 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

The arrival of the French column at Fez on 21 May provoked no immediate counter-move by Spain, but the Spaniards continued to clamour for the lifting of the restrictions which had been placed upon their actions by the convention of October 1904.⁴⁶ In order to discourage them from taking further unilateral action or appealing to Germany for support, Grey tried without success to persuade the French government to make substantial concessions to Madrid.⁴⁷ At first Bertie supported Grey's efforts, but after the occupation by Spanish troops of Larache and Alcazar on 8 June, he began to have doubts about the wisdom of this course.⁴⁸ He was not at all satisfied when in response to an appeal by Cambon that Britain should apply pressure on the Spanish government, Grey replied that he dare not press Spain hard lest she should thereby be thrown into Germany's arms. To Nicolson he wrote on 21 June:

I fear that unless by energetic language we restrain the Spaniards who of necessity must be amenable to our indications and keep them to their engagements we shall lead the French to come to the conclusion that we are so much afraid of Germany that we would submit to a Franco-German arrangement concerning Morocco outside the Spanish sphere of the Secret Agreement.

Clearly in Bertie's view the defence of British interests in Morocco required as before the maintenance of French confidence in the strength of the entente.⁴⁹ By then, however, Grey seems already to have been convinced that the partition of Morocco was inevitable and that France would have to pay a price for it.⁵⁰

46. Grey to Bertie 22 May and 1 June 1911; de Bunsen to Grey, 27 May 1911; Bertie to Grey, 3 June 1911; B.D., vii, nos.285, 307, 292, 293 and 311. Geoffray to Cruppi, 27 May; 28 May and 7 June 1911; D.D.F.2, xiii, nos.322, 323 and 341. Minute by Grey 22 May, 1911; minute by Nicolson, 23 May 1911, F.O.371/1156. Grey to de Bunsen, 23 May 1911, F.O.371/1157, despt.no.674.

47. Ibid.

48. Lister to Grey, 9 June 1911, F.O.371/1156, tel.100.

49. Bertie to Nicolson, 21 June 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. But Jules Cambon advised de Bunsen that he thought the British government should make it clear at Paris that Spain should have her northern zone. E.T.S.Dugdale, pp.259-260.

50. Grey to Bertie, 1 June and 9 June 1911, B.D., vii, nos.307 and 314. Minute by Grey on Nicolson to Grey, 6 June 1911, F.O.371/1155.

Bertie still thought that Cruppi believed that he would be able to fulfill his promise to withdraw from Fez, and remain within the bounds of the Algeciras act.⁵¹ But Cruppi's days at the Quai d'Orsay were numbered. On 21 May a mono-plane plunged into a group of official guests at the opening of the Paris to Madrid air race killing Berteaux and seriously injuring Monis.⁵² Unable to continue effectively in office, Monis resigned on 27 June, and a new radical socialist government was formed with Caillaux as president of the council.

George Grahame, the first secretary of the Paris embassy, had some misgivings about the elevation of Caillaux to the presidency of the council. His intellectual ability, he thought, would be impaired by his 'abnormal vanity', and he predicted that he would be led into 'unwise courses'.⁵³ For the moment, however, only Caillaux's association with Egyptian finance, and the possibility that he might champion the rights of the French colony at Cairo, caused Bertie to anticipate any difficulties with the new premier.⁵⁴ He was more doubtful about the appointment of Justin de Selves as foreign minister. A former prefect for the department of Seine, he had as little experience of foreign affairs as his predecessor had had, and Bertie was perturbed lest he should give to the bureaucracy of the Quai d'Orsay a 'fresh start in its policy of

51. Bertie to Grey, 14 June 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

52. Bertie to Nicolson, 21 May 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/348. Bertie to Grey, 22 May 1911, F.O.371/1118, despt.no.223.

53. Grahame also described Caillaux as 'très fat', full of personal vanity and jaunty as a cock sparrow'. Grahame to Tyrrell, 28 June 1911, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. George Grahame was one of the few members of Bertie's staff who regularly put his views on paper. His hopes of one day becoming ambassador at Paris were, however, frustrated. After leaving Paris he was to be appointed minister at Brussels and later ambassador at Madrid. David Kelly, The Ruling Few, (London, 1952), p.182.

54. Caillaux was president of the Crédit Foncier Egyptien. Binion, p.31. Bertie to Nicolson, 27 June 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

obstruction in the settlement of questions, except on their own terms'.⁵⁵ His concern was shared by Paul Cambon, who would have preferred Cruppi to have remained at his post. It would be difficult, Cambon commented, for de Selves to avoid falling under the influence of the personnel of the foreign ministry, which, while meritorious, was in his opinion too young. 'Il a toute la fougue et l'intransigence de la jeunesse', he observed to Cruppi, 'il s' imagine qu'on peut obtenir des résultats en faisant la grosse voix et il confond l'énergie avec la brutalité'.⁵⁶ In the summer of 1911 much the same criticism might have been levelled at the Wilhelmstrasse.

For the Germans the results of their accord with France of February 1909 had been very disappointing. The Quai d'Orsay had shown itself ready to grant to them a position of economic equality in Morocco, but attempts to associate French and German interests there had been singularly unsuccessful. At the same time France had been rapidly extending her influence throughout the Shereefian empire. Elsewhere German aspirations for a commercial consortium with France in the Congo, and for an accommodation on the Bagdad railway had been checked by the French government.⁵⁷ Caillaux's appointment as premier had been welcomed by Kiderlen-Wächter

55. Grahame commented upon de Selves' appointment: 'he must have diplomatic ability to have been able to get along all these years with the Paris Municipality which is often a turbulent body'. Grahame to Tyrrell, 28 June 1911, op.cit. Bertie found de Selves 'a charming man and easy to get on with and sensible'. Bertie to Nicolson, 28 June 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/349. There is, however, no evidence to support the claim made by A.L.Kennedy that Bertie 'coached' de Selves in the affairs of Europe. Indeed, Bertie later commented: 'M.de Selves was wholly unacquainted with foreign affairs on taking office and he relied to a very large extent upon M.Maurice Herbet'. A.L.Kennedy, Old Diplomacy and New (London, 1922) p.173. Bertie to Grey, 9 July 1914. F.O.146/4381, despt.no.338.
56. P.Cambon to Cruppi, 29 June 1911, D.D.F.2, xiii, no.370.
57. Pierre Guillen, 'Les questions coloniales dans les relations franco-allemandes', Revue Historique, ccl (1972), 87-89. R.Poidevin, L'Allemagne de Guillaume II à Hindenburg, 1900-1933 (Paris, 1972), pp.166-167; and Les Relations Economiques et Financières, pp.613-630.

who wanted to have a strong man in Paris with whom to commence negotiations.⁵⁸ Yet despite this and the attempts of Jules Cambon to broach with Bethmann Hollweg and Kiderlen-Wächter the subject of a general agreement, the German government were by the end of June in a defiant mood.⁵⁹ They were, however, a good deal less concerned with the simple acquisition of a Moroccan port than Bertie surmised them to be.

Anxious both to overcome domestic divisions in Germany, and to maintain the country's prestige abroad, Kiderlen-Wächter sought to obtain from the French some compensation for the consolidation of their north African empire. Experience, however, had tended to show that the French were not to be hurried in such matters, and that if Germany were to gain anything from them, she would first need a basis on which to negotiate. Thus, judging the situation to once more have become fluid in Morocco, the German government announced on 1 July that they were sending a gun boat, the Panther, to Agadir.⁶⁰

Bertie received this news, not at Paris, but at Bagnoles-de-l'Orne, a resort from which he did not return for another week. Germany's action he viewed simply in terms of an attempt by the German government to establish themselves in Morocco, and there was little doubt in his mind that the Germans had been encouraging the Spaniards in order to have a pretext for action. 'As was to be expected', he observed to Nicolson on 2 July, 'the German Govt. has pegged out a claim on the Atlantic Coast of Morocco notwithstanding Germany's self-denying agreement with France'.⁶¹

58. J.Cambon to Caillaux, 10 July 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no.53.

59. J.Cambon to Cruppi, 11 June, 12 June and 22 June 1911, D.D.F.2, xiii, nos.349, 352 and 364.

60. The Wilhelmstrasse did not, however, rule out the possibility of securing a Moorish port as compensation. Fritz Fischer, War of Illusions, German Policies from 1911-1914 (London, 1973), pp.85-94, Joanne Stafford Mortimer, 'Commercial Interests and German Diplomacy in the Agadir Crisis', Historical Journal, x (1967), 440-456. J-C Allain, 'La canonnière "Eber" à Casablanca (9-12 Mars. 1911). Etude d'un fait divers des relations franco-allemandes', Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, xx (1973), 269-285. Jarausch, pp.120-122.

61. Bertie to Nicolson, 2 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

This view was shared by George Grahame, who considered that the Germans had had an eye on Agadir for a considerable time. The French press, he considered to be mistaken in their claim that the Germans were trying to hurry France to negotiate and offer compensation elsewhere. Agadir, he fancied, was 'much more valuable to the Germans than any rectification of an African colonial frontier'.⁶²

Although Grey had been ready at the time of Algeciras to accept a German foothold on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, Bertie had remained resolutely opposed to such a concession. He was afraid, however, that, if hard pressed, the French might be prepared to give way on this point. Since in his opinion this would be more injurious to Britain than to France, he thought that it would cast upon the British government the 'entire odium' of opposing the fulfillment of Germany's objectives.⁶³ Grahame also believed that there was an essential difference between British and French interests in Morocco for, he observed to Tyrrell, there was not 'the same question of naval strategy and command of the routes between the French and the Germans as there is between us and the latter'.⁶⁴ Given the territorial aspirations of the French colonial party, he thought that the Agadir affair might appear as a 'blessing in disguise'. France, he reasoned, would gain a free hand in Morocco 'for if Germany dips her finger in the sauce, she will have less right to the pie being cut into by France'.⁶⁵

62. Grahame to Tyrrell, 5 July 1911, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

63. Bertie to Grey, 12 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.372.

64. Grahame to Tyrrell, 5 July 1911, op.cit.

65. Grahame commented on French policy in Morocco: '...the French feel that they have no very strong arguments to use against the German action... French policy in Morocco has been itself such a tissue of sophisms and hypocracies that the French have little to say now to Spain and Germany. All three have slipped through the too wide meshes of the Act of Algeciras on the plea of the natural right of a country to protect its subjects'. Grahame to Tyrrell, 3 July 1911, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

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Neither Bertie nor Grahame were wrong in concluding that Germany's action would reveal a difference of interests between France and Great Britain, but they were very much mistaken in their estimation of the stances which the two powers would adopt. Like Bertie, Grey and his colleagues in the cabinet assumed that the despatch of the Panther to Agadir was a move intended by the Germans to stake out a claim in Morocco. In order to counter any impression that the Germans might have gathered that Britain could be left out of account, they agreed on 4 July that Metternich should be warned that because of Britain's commercial interests there and her treaty obligations to France, she must be a party to any negotiations on Morocco.⁶⁶ But evidently with a view to encouraging the French to accept a compromise solution, they also decided that Paul Cambon should be informed that it might be impossible to return to the status quo ante in Morocco, and that it might therefore be necessary to 'give a more definite recognition than before to German interests' there.⁶⁷ Consultations with the Admiralty had helped to convince Grey that there was no place on Morocco's western coast-line that might easily be turned into a naval base, and that from the point of view of Britain's interests it was not vital to prevent Germany from having a port there. So long as the government had an engagement from Germany promising not to fortify such an establishment, and some territorial or political compensation with which to satisfy public

66. Grey to de Salis, 3 July and 4 July 1911, B.D., vii, nos.347 and 356.

67. Asquith to George V, 4 July 1911, Asquith MSS., vol.6. Grey also informed Paul Cambon on 4 July that in the British government's opinion Britain should be a party to discussions about Morocco. However, he informed Goschen on 13 July that the government did not wish to impede a settlement between France and Germany and they would have to wait to know what Germany's objective was before they could decide whether British interests required their intervention in the discussions. Grey to Bertie, 4 July 1911; Grey to Goschen, 13 July 1911; B.D., vii, nos.355 and 378.

opinion, Grey believed that Britain could rely on her naval strength to prevent the fortification of an Atlantic port.⁶⁸

This was not the attitude which either the French public or government expected the British government to adopt. Lancelot Carnegie, who was charge d'affaires in Bertie's absence, reported on 6 July that little or nothing was said in the French press about Germany establishing herself at Agadir, and the impression given in Paris was that the British government could be counted upon to 'prevent Germany from obtaining an undue advantage on the Atlantic coast-line'.⁶⁹ Caillaux, who had temporarily taken charge of the Quai d'Orsay while de Selves accompanied Fallières on a state visit to the Netherlands, was eager that Germany should not even be given a glimpse of obtaining anything in Morocco. When on 6 July Paul Cambon enquired of Grey as to his views upon the compensation which Germany might receive for allowing France a free hand in Morocco, he did so on the assumption that in no circumstances would Britain agree to Germany having a port there. He pressed Grey to 'lay it down as absolutely impossible that Germany should obtain a territorial sphere' in Morocco. The foreign secretary would, however, go no further than to express a preference that any compensation which Germany secured should be elsewhere.⁷⁰

Bertie was thus acting in a sense entirely contrary to the views expressed by Grey when on the morning of 11 July he warned de Selves that the British government would never consent to the establishment of Germany on Morocco's Atlantic coast.⁷¹ There seems, however, to be little reason to disbelieve his subsequent

68. Grey to Bertie, 10 July and 12 July 1911, B.D., vii, nos.368 and 375.

69. Bertie to Grey, 6 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.361.

70. Grey to Bertie, 6 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.363.

71. Bertie to Grey, 11 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.369.

explanation that he had not received Grey's report of his conversation with Cambon on 6 July until the evening of the 11th. He could surely have gained nothing by encouraging de Selves to believe other than what Cambon had already been told by Grey.⁷²

Worried by the stance assumed by Grey, Bertie warned him in a despatch of 12 July that the Germans might, despite assurances to the contrary, make preparations at a Moroccan port to convert it at short notice and at a favourable opportunity into a fortified base. As an example he cited the Russian fortification of Batoum in 1886: a violation of the treaty of Berlin against which only Britain had protested. German assurances, he observed to Nicolson, would last just so long as it suited them. Moreover, if the French were to learn that the British were prepared to give way to Germany, he predicted, 'we shall help to throw them into the Teuton embrace'.⁷³ Nicolson sympathized with this point of view, and like Bertie doubted the wisdom of allowing Germany to establish herself in a Moroccan port. As, however, the Germans were in occupation of Agadir, he thought that it would be difficult to induce them to abandon the place even with offers of very substantial compensation elsewhere.⁷⁴ This Bertie refuted. Convinced that the Germans had asserted themselves because they believed that Britain would not stand by France in Morocco he was confident if Grey joined with the French in refusing to accept a German port, 'they may bluster but there will be nothing else'.⁷⁵

Grey was not personally in favour of a German foothold in Morocco. If that were conceded, he recognized that public

72. Bertie to Grey, 12 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.372.

73. Bertie to Grey, 12 July 1911; Bertie to Nicolson, 12 July 1911; B.D., vii, nos.372 and 376.

74. Nicolson to Bertie, 10 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. P.Cambon to de Selves, 8 July 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no.44.

75. Bertie to Nicolson, 12 July 1911, op.cit.

opinion would require that Britain should also have some compensation, and that that was likely to lead to complications.⁷⁶ Indeed, Grey seems to have been quite relieved by the news that France and Germany were negotiating on the basis of a settlement in the Congo.⁷⁷ He, nevertheless, insisted in a private letter to Bertie of 12 July that he could not 'let the French place upon us the whole burden of keeping Germany out of Morocco at all costs'. The case of Batoum was not regarded by him as being particularly relevant to the existing situation for, as he explained, that port was not on the ocean and at the mercy of the British fleet. More instructive, he thought, was the argument put forward by Eyre Corwe that naval experts could quickly change their minds as they had done with regard to the French seizure and fortification of Bizerta.⁷⁸

Although Grey's response was discouraging, Bertie did not desist from pressing for a more resolute stand on Morocco. On 16 July he protested to Nicolson that the point he was trying to make was that if in the future the Germans should attempt to fortify a Moroccan port, Britain would stand alone, and do no more than protest. The government might be fully occupied elsewhere, France might have been placated, and public opinion might not then be prepared to support strong measures against Germany. In the present circumstances Bertie thought, it was to Britain's interest that the French should object to the Germans having a commercial port in Morocco. 'Public Opinion', he observed, 'has been outraged in England at the brigand-like proceedings of the Germans; that they (the Germans) appear to be surprised and alarmed'. That was in his estimation a 'state of mind to be encouraged'. Already he found de Selves to be taken aback by

⁷⁶ Grey to Bertie, 12 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.375.

⁷⁷ Asquith to George V, 11 July 1911, Asquith MSS., vol.6. Grey to Bertie, 13 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.377.

⁷⁸ Minutes by Eyre Crowe and Grey on Bertie to Grey, 12 July 1911 and Grey to Bertie, 12 July 1911; B.D., vii, nos.372 and 375.

Grey's attitude, and he feared that if the Germans were to learn that Britain had no unalterable objections to their having a commercial port, they would 'squeeze the French'.⁷⁹

Grey was not convinced by Bertie's logic. Yet some concern was felt within the Foreign Office about the possibility of British interests being ignored by the French and Germans.⁸⁰ Already Nicolson had been perturbed by the failure of the French to respond promptly to a request from Grey that the entente partners should reach an accommodation on a solution agreeable to them.⁸¹ Eyre Crowe objected to the German claims that as their conversations with the French were concerned with finding compensation for Germany in the Congo in return for allowing France a free hand in Morocco, the participation of third parties was not required. Although he conceded that there was no need for Britain to stir so long as she could rely on the French telling her 'frankly and fully' what was going on, he insisted that Britain was directly concerned with the international position of Morocco.⁸²

Grey's officials were, as in 1909, particularly sensitive about the prospect of the French and Germans discussing their mutual economic interests in Morocco.⁸³ On 11 July Bertie warned

79. Bertie to Nicolson, 16 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.386.

80. Grey to Bertie, 18 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.393. Grey's officials were not only concerned about British interests in Morocco being ignored. Early in August Mallet complained: 'The French and Germans are acquiring all the railways in European Turkey and we shall be left out in the cold'. He suggested that 'the French Govt. should be clearly given to understand by Sir F. Bertie directly with M. de Selves that a change of attitude by the French agents at Constantinople towards British enterprises is imperative'. Minute by Mallet on Lowther to Grey, 2 Aug. 1911, F.O.371/1240. despt.no.148.

81. Nicolson to Bertie, 10 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Nicolson had been under the impression that the British and French governments would in the first instance come to an understanding as to what line was to be followed with Germany, and that they would then approach Germany. Grey to Bertie, 13 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.379.

82. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Goschen to Grey, 14 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.383.

83. Minutes by Villiers, Eyre Crowe and Langley on Goschen to Grey, 10 July 1911, F.O.371/1164, tel.47 (published without minutes as B.D., vii, no.367). Minutes by Eyre Crowe and Langley on Bertie to Grey, 14 July 1911, F.O.371/1164, tel.99 (published without minutes as B.D., vii, no.381). P. Cambon to J. Cambon, 6 July 1911, Correspondance J., 328-329.

de Selves that 'considerable irritation had been caused in British as well as German commercial quarters by the avidity of French financiers who desired to keep everything for themselves'. Grey, Nicolson, and Eyre Crowe all approved of Bertie's language. Indeed, Eyre Crowe thought that Bertie's line should be pursued a little further, and that the time might not be inopportune for telling the French government that more regard was due from them for British rights and interests in Morocco than they had been in the habit of showing. Nicolson, however, considered that Bertie's objection was quite sufficient, and nothing further was said on the matter.⁸⁴

In the meanwhile Bertie attempted to dispel the impression that de Selves had derived from Paul Cambon that the British government would not object to the French giving way to German demands in the Congo.⁸⁵ These, he was informed by de Selves and Cambon on 17 July, were for the French Congo from the Sangha river to the Atlantic in return for a rectification in France's favour of the northern frontier of the Cameroons and a free hand in Morocco. No mention was made by either Frenchman of Kiderlen-Wächter's suggestion that Germany might cede Togoland to France, and Cambon predicted that the Germans might claim to have acquired France's pre-emptive rights on the former free state. As Bertie observed, they gave 'prominence to the injury which such a cession as the Germans asked for would do to British interests as well as those of France'. He did not, however, try to counter these suggestions. Instead, he reminded Grey of the reversionary claims

84. Bertie to Grey, 11 July 1911, F.O.371/1155, tel.55, and minutes by Eyre Crowe, Nicolson and Grey.

85. Paul Cambon informed de Selves on 10 July 'Si le Gouvernement allemand formulait une demande de compensation (au) Congo, le Secrétaire d'Etat des affaires étrangères ne verrait aucun inconvénient à ce qu'elle lui fut accordée'. P.Cambon to de Selves, 10 July 1911, P.D.F.2, xiv, no.48. Bertie to Grey, 11 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.369.

that Germany had staked out in 1898. 'How would it suit us', he enquired of Grey, 'to have the Germans at Libreville on the estuary of the Gaboon and at Brazzaville'?

Germany's 'excessive requirements' also served to confirm Bertie in his opinion that her real objective was to reconcile the French to a German establishment in Morocco.⁸⁶ Similar views were expressed by Nicolson, who advised Goschen that Germany would only be persuaded to moderate her demands by Britain showing a united front with France.⁸⁷ But for Eyre Crowe, who was worried lest concessions to Germany should mean a defeat for the entente, the dominant point was whether Britain would in the last resort be prepared to fight by the side of France.⁸⁸

Grey admitted that the entente was in danger. But in his estimation the French were not entirely innocent in their Moroccan policy, and it was at least questionable whether in these circumstances a concession to Germany could be regarded as a diplomatic defeat.⁸⁹ Thus despite Bertie's fears about German ambitions in Africa, Grey telegraphed to him on 19 July 'that the obvious course seems to be for France to make counter proposals stating what she can concede in the French Congo'.⁹⁰ He also emphasized to Bertie that Britain would not make the admission of Germany into Morocco a casus belli unconditionally. He explained that if a settlement in the Congo were to prove impracticable it might not be possible to exclude Germany from Morocco and place France in

86. Bertie to Grey, 17 July and 18 July 1911, B.D., vii, nos. 391 and 392. P. Cambon to de Fleuriau, 18 July 1911, Correspondance, ii 329-331. Nevertheless, despite the fears expressed by Bertie, Grey felt able to tell Cambon on 24 July that the British government would have no objection to France's abandonment of Libreville.

P. Cambon to de Selves, 26 July 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no. 106.

87. Nicolson to Goschen, 18 July 1911, B.D., vii, no. 395.

Daeschner to de Selves, 18 July 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no. 96.

88. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 18 July 1911, op.cit.

89. Grey to Bertie, 19 July 1911, B.D., vii, no. 397.

90. Grey to Bertie, 19 July 1911, B.D., vii, no. 396.

possession of it without a resort to war. The only alternative, he concluded, was either a return to the status quo of Algeciras, or a consolidation of France's position in Morocco by some concession to Germany there. At the same time the foreign secretary considered putting pressure on the Germans. Limited by the cabinet from pursuing as bold a course towards Berlin as he would have favoured, he suggested to Bertie that he might propose a conference of the Algeciras powers and intimate to Germany that if she refused Britain would take action to protect her interests.⁹¹

The French response to the summary of Grey's views which Bertie communicated to de Selves on 20 July was in Nicolson's words 'somewhat stiff in tone'. After pointing out that the negotiations with Germany on equatorial Africa had not broken down, and that according to all appearances they would last for sometime to come, the foreign minister went on to raise the whole question of Britain's obligations to France in Morocco. If the discussions failed, then, he observed, the French would not put aside the British proposal for a conference, but to allow the Germans to create a state establishment in Morocco would, he reasoned, be contrary to the Anglo-French accord of 1904 and the Franco-German declaration of 1909. The French, he claimed, could not therefore admit that a conference

91. Grey to Bertie, 19 July 1911; Grey to Asquith, 19 July 1911; B.D., vii, nos. 397 and 399. Grey subsequently told C.P. Scott of The Manchester Guardian that he 'did not wish Germany through ignorance of our real intentions to commit herself so far that she could not withdraw'. Trevor Wilson, The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott (London, 1970). p. 51. At the cabinet meeting on 19 July Grey had pressed his colleagues to agree that he should at once propose to the German government the assembly of a conference to deal with the new situation 'with the intimation that in the event of their refusal, we should take steps to assert and protect British interests'. But this was strenuously opposed by Loreburn, the lord chancellor, and any decision on a communication to Germany was deferred. Asquith to George V, 19 July 1911, Asquith MSS., vol. 6. Paul Cambon also thought in terms of using a proposal for a conference as a diplomatic weapon. P. Cambon to de Fleuriau, 18 July 1911, Correspondance, II, 329-331.

could be called upon to consider such a concession.⁹²

That same day Grey sent to Bertie a private letter in which he elaborated on his ideas, and instructions to use as much of its substance as he thought was 'discreet in conversation'. He stated that he was prepared to give the French diplomatic support, but that he would only go to war for the defence of British interests, and not to 'put the Algeciras Act aside and put France in virtual possession of Morocco'. While an attempt by Germany to humiliate France might, he admitted, affect British interests so seriously that it would have to be resisted, he thought that there was no case for that/^{at}present. 'The French', he observed, had 'drifted into difficulties without knowing which way they really wanted to go'. Their action in Morocco, he considered only 'less wrong technically' than that of Germany and Spain, for they had in effect turned Morocco into a French protectorate. If in these circumstances he were to make a move, Grey feared that he might find himself in one of two false positions: Germany might propose to deal with him alone over Morocco, which would mean betraying France; or he might be led into a war with Germany, which could mean fighting solely to put France in control of Morocco. The best solution in his view would be a Franco-German deal on the Congo, and the next best, a tripartite partition of Morocco. If France could not accept either of these solutions, there might, he admitted, be nothing for it but a return to the 'status quo of Algeciras: a cumbrous, troublesome, and temporary expedient'.

92. Bertie to Grey, 20 July 1911, B.D., vii, nos.401 and 403. Nicolson to Goschen, 24 July 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/349. Although de Selves seems not to have been worried by the idea of a conference the suggestion did encounter some opposition from Jules Cambon. He regarded it as a dangerous expedient as French freedom of action in Morocco was dependent upon a conflict of interests between Britain and Germany. It would, he feared, make France too dependent on Britain. De Selves to J.Cambon, 20 July 1911; J.Cambon to de Selves, 24 July 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos.86 and 98.

Unlike Bertie, Grey was not concerned about who owned tropical territory which Britain did not want for herself. The possessions of Britain and France were so extensive in Africa that neither power could in his estimation augment them without Germany gaining 'some substantial addition to her share'. If the 1898 agreement were ever put into force, Germany would anyway acquire Angola, and Grey understood Lobito Bay to be a better place for a naval station than Libreville. Moreover, in a separate telegram Grey again suggested to Bertie that the admittance of Germany to a share in France's pre-emptive rights in the Belgian Congo might be an element in a Franco-German bargain.⁹³

Little of this was to Bertie's liking. 'It is very shortsighted', he protested to Eyre Crowe, 'for us to show our fear of Germany and our anxiety to get the French to give away what they so much want to keep'. It might end, he thought, in the French drawing the conclusion that Britain was of no use to them with the inevitable result that they might make with Germany terms which though 'some of those who direct the counsels of the Empire may now think harmless, may hereafter prove very harmful to us'. He preferred to take advantage of the discretion left to him by Grey, and not to frighten de Selves by imparting to him his views. Already Eyre Crowe, who was 'ashamed as well as angry' at the line which the cabinet were taking, had written to Bertie on Nicolson's behalf to request him not to make any reference to Grey's proposal with regard to the Belgian Congo except in a separate telegram or despatch. Worried lest the Germans should hear of it, and make things 'hot' for Britain at Brussels, they were anxious that it should be kept out of the Foreign Office print. Bertie promised

93. Grey to Bertie, 20 July 1911, B.D., vii, nos.404 and 405. Grey to Bertie, 20 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

not to give them away.⁹⁴ Indeed, as he subsequently explained to Grey, he thought it better for Britain's relations with France that whatever concessions might be necessary to prevent a conflict should be in compliance with either Germany's demands or France's offers. If they talked now of a partition of Morocco between France, Spain, and Germany as a settlement which would be acceptable to Britain, they would, he believed, alarm the French government, who might fear that they were being deserted.

Speaking in a private and unofficial capacity rather than as Grey's representative, Bertie pointed out to de Selves on 21 July that if there were a conference, the Germans would claim that Morocco had changed since Algeciras. They would, he observed, probably not be satisfied with a French undertaking to withdraw at a specified date, and it might not be possible to revert to the status quo ante. With the aid of an atlas, he also demonstrated to de Selves the basis of his belief that Germany's ambition was to extend across Africa from east to west. She would never, he predicted, quietly acquiesce in the French exercising their right of pre-emption in the Belgian Congo, which neither Britain nor Germany had ever recognized. He suggested, however, that France might by foregoing part of her claim there be able to reduce Germany's demands. Thus he enumerated the difficulties which could arise from reverting to a conference, and gently encouraged the French to seek a settlement in the Congo.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, some of his worst fears were confirmed when that evening Caillaux raised with him the subject of his recent memorandum. Any suggestion by the British government that France should admit

94. Bertie to Eyre Crowe, 21 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Eyre Crowe to Bertie, 20 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160

95. Bertie to Grey, 21 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.407.

Germany to a territorial position in Morocco would, he warned Bertie, be inconsistent with the agreement of 1904. Without British backing, he estimated that the French might have to make great concessions to keep Germany out of Morocco, and the consequent feeling of resentment in France at being 'deserted' by England would be 'deep and lasting'.⁹⁶

Neither Grey nor his colleagues in the cabinet had any intention of deserting France. They agreed on 21 July that Metternich should be warned that seventeen days had elapsed without Germany taking notice of their position, and that 'it must be clearly understood that we should recognise no settlement of Morocco in which we had not a voice'.⁹⁷ On the same day Lloyd George made it clear in his Mansion House speech that it was 'intolerable' that Britain should be treated as if she were of no account 'where her interests were vitally affected'.⁹⁸ Bertie, however, was less concerned about impressing upon the Germans the need to take Britain into account, than with reassuring the French

96. Bertie to Grey, 21 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.408.

97. Asquith to George V, 21 July 1911, Asquith MSS., vol.6. Grey to Goschen, 21 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.411.

98. Extract from Speech of Mr. Lloyd George on July 21, 1911, B.D., vii, no.412. A.J.P. Taylor's contention that Lloyd George's speech was directed at Caillaux and not at Kiderlen-Wächter has been challenged by Drs. Cosgrave and Dockrill. Both have concluded that the declaration was intended as a warning to Germany. Keith Wilson has, however, recently pointed out that when Lloyd George's speech was delivered 'British policy was to threaten both France and Germany with a conference - Germany because she could count on being outnumbered there as she had been at Algeiras in 1906, France because this would imply admitting Germany in some way to Morocco'. A.J.P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe (Oxford, 1954), p.47. R.A. Cosgrave, 'A Note on Lloyd George's Speech at the Mansion House, 21 July 1911', Historical Journal, xii (1969), 698-701. M. Dockrill, 'David Lloyd George and Foreign Policy before 1914', ubi supra, 16 and 31. K. Wilson, 'The Agadir Crisis, the Mansion House Speech, and the Double Edgedness of Agreements', Historical Journal, xv (1972), 513-532.

In November 1911 Kiderlen-Wächter referred in a speech to the Reichstag to Lloyd George's declaration having been provoked by the misrepresentation of German policy. According to the Berlin correspondent of the Viennese Neue Freie Presse it was believed in German parliamentary circles that Kiderlen had Bertie in mind. It was reported that Bertie had been to London and that his exaggerated reports had induced the British government to deliver the warning to Germany. In fact, however, Bertie did not visit London until after Lloyd George had delivered his speech. Extract from Neue Freie Presse enclosed in Russell to Eyre Crowe, 25 Nov. 1911, F.O.371/1128, private.

that Britain was not wavering in her loyalty to the entente. This object was probably uppermost in his mind when, at Grey's request, he journeyed to London on 23 July.⁹⁹

In Nicholson, whom he visited shortly after his arrival in London, Bertie no doubt found a sympathetic colleague. Sharing much the same opinion of the situation as Bertie, Nicolson was reluctant to press the French on the issue of a German concession in Morocco, and he had no wish to give the French the impression that Britain's adhesion to the entente was weakening. Already on 21 July he had advised Grey to await talks with Bertie and Paul Cambon before entering into discussions with the French upon the scope and interpretation of the 1904 agreement 'which might assume a controversial character'.¹⁰⁰ Bertie's own view of that arrangement was that while it did not bind Britain to support France with force in Morocco, the promise of diplomatic support which it did contain had little meaning unless it had some thing behind it. In a set of notes, which he prepared for interviews with Grey, Asquith, and Lloyd George, he explained his views with regard to the entente, and the present political crisis. These notes said little that was new, and for the most part simply reaffirmed the views that Bertie had earlier expressed to Grey and Eyre Crowe. He examined the difficulties which any French government would encounter in trying to obtain parliamentary sanction for concessions to Germany, and added that if the Germans did not accept what the French offered, then things might remain as they were for a time. Were, however, the Germans to add to their force at Agadir, or to land men for a stay, he thought that the French government would suggest that British, French, and Spanish forces

99. Grey to Bertie, 20 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Bertie to Grey, 21 July 1911, tel. Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

100. Minute by Nicolson, 21 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.409. Nicolson to Goschen, 24 July 1911, op.cit.

should do likewise. He considered that Kiderlen-Wächter wanted to deal separately with France and Britain in order to impress upon the French that the British were indifferent. 'Our turn with Germany would come next', he observed, and Britain might then have to reckon with a hostile France. 'We should', he concluded, 'be in splendid isolation which nowadays would be highly dangerous'. The policy which he recommended was simply for Britain to require to be kept fully informed, and to state that the French should inform her whenever they needed support.¹⁰¹

Tyrrell had, before Bertie's arrival in London, written to Hardinge that he hoped that Bertie would 'carry the day' against 'the Powers that be', who, he thought, were still inclined to believe that Germany could be placated by small concessions.¹⁰² Unfortunately, there are besides Bertie's notes no records of any of his conversations with those prominent politicians whom he hoped to meet. Moreover, although Paul Cambon subsequently described his visit as having been very effective, it is difficult to see in what sense he meant this.¹⁰³ In so far as Bertie had endeavoured to restrain Grey from advising the French to make further concessions, he had been singularly unsuccessful: a fact which became apparent when during the following week the discussions between France and Germany entered another critical period.

The Franco-German negotiations were concerned primarily with the question of the extent of territory which the French would concede to Germany in the Congo in return for a free hand in Morocco

101. Notes by Bertie, 25 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

102. Lowe and Dockrill, iii, 434.

103. Perhaps Paul Cambon was satisfied by the assurance given to him by Grey on 25 July that he shared his opinion that 'si la situation prenait une tournure pouvant nous inspirer des appréhensions, il serait nécessaire de nous entendre et de prévoir toutes les eventualités'. P.Cambon to de Selves, 25 July and 28 July 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, nos.102 and 112.

and territorial accessions in west Africa. Both the German emperor and Bethmann Hollweg tried to exercise a moderating influence upon their foreign secretary, and from Berlin Jules Cambon urged upon de Selves the necessity of being generous in his offers of compensation.¹⁰⁴ Although neither the foreign minister nor his senior officials in the Quai d'Orsay showed any sign of adopting a more flexible attitude, Caillaux was prepared to envisage a broader arrangement with Germany. When towards the end of July von der Lancken, the councillor of the German embassy at Paris, approached the premier through the agency of a French financier, an exchange of views commenced between Caillaux and the representatives of Germany.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, however, Kiderlen-Wächter maintained an uncompromising stance, and on 28 July he practically rejected the latest French proposals.¹⁰⁶

The news from Berlin left de Selves in a 'very agitated state', but Bertie discouraged his hopes that Britain might send a warship to Agadir, and impressed upon him the importance of the negotiations being broken off by Berlin rather than Paris. If the Germans were to reject France's final offer, then he recommended that Jules Cambon should state that he would have to refer to Paris for instructions, so as to give the French time to inform Britain and allow

104. Neither Paul Cambon nor Jules Cambon were happy about the handling of the Franco-German negotiations by de Selves and his officials. On 10 July Jules Cambon wrote privately to Caillaux that Kiderlen-Wächter 'souscieux de ménager les susceptibilités de M.de Selves' had asked Schoen if he could see Caillaux. J.Cambon to Caillaux, 10 July 1911; P.Cambon to J.Cambon, 27 July 1911; Notes de M.Jules Cambon; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos.53 and 117, and Annexe, 749-753.

105. Binion, pp.38-39 and 45-46. Paul Binoux, Les Pionniers de l'Europe: l'Europe et le Rapprochement Franco-Allemand (Paris, 1972), pp.27-54. A.Méssimy, Mes Souvenirs (Paris, 1937), pp.60-61. Caillaux, ii, 156-161. Caillaux's contact with the German embassy commenced on 25 July through the medium of the French financier, Fondère. D.D.F.2, xiv, no.105.

106. Goschen to Grey, 29 July 1911, B.D., vii, no.438. Bertie to Grey, 31 July 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

Grey to propose a conference before the issue of a German ultimatum.¹⁰⁷ This procedure was favoured by both Paul Cambon and Nicolson, and de Selves followed up the suggestion with instructions to Berlin in very similar terms.¹⁰⁸

In the meantime, Grey, whose main concern was to avoid a breakdown of the Franco-German negotiations, continued to urge unanimity upon the French. One difficulty, he imagined, was that while a concession to Germany in the Congo would produce changes in ^{the} colour of the map in Germany's favour, there would be no corresponding change in the colour of Morocco if all that France were to obtain was a free hand there. To meet the likely objections of the French parliament to this, he suggested to Bertie and to Paul Cambon that the French might be able to make larger concessions if the bargain were made subject to a conference which would recognize the existence of a French protectorate. He was prepared to go further, and on 1 August he told Paul Cambon that he thought that future German expansion in Africa could be met if the Portuguese colonies or the Belgian Congo were offered for sale. France, he argued, would not want the whole of the Belgian territory and Britain would only want small pieces adjoining her existing possessions, so they would not stand in Germany's way.¹⁰⁹

107. Bertie to Grey, 29 July 1911, B.D., vii, nos.440 and 441. The question of whether a French warship should be sent to Moroccan water had already resulted in a difference of opinion between de Selves and Caillaux at the beginning of the crisis. De Selves had wanted to send one, but Caillaux had thought it wiser to await German explanations. While Caillaux had temporary charge of the Quai d'Orsay at the beginning of July he learned from Paul Cambon that he had told Grey that the French might send a warship, and had asked if the British would do likewise. In the event, however, the British cabinet rejected the idea. De Selves to P.Cambon, 1 July 1911; P.Cambon to de Selves, 2 July 1911; Caillaux to P.Cambon, 4 July 1911; P.Cambon to Caillaux, 4 July 1911; de Selves to Bapst, 5 July 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos.1, 9, 18, 19 and 25. Grey to Bertie, 3 July 1911; Nicolson to Grey, 4 July 1911; Grey to Bertie, 4 July 1911; B.D., vii, nos.351, 354 and 355. Asquith to George V, 4 July 1911, Asquith MSS., vol.6.

108. P.Cambon to J.Cambon, 30 July 1911, Correspondance, ii, 336-338. De Selves to J.Cambon, 30 July 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, nos.126 and 127.

109. Grey to Bertie, 28 July & 1 Aug.1911, B.D., nos.433, 434 & 449. P.Cambon to J.Cambon, Correspondance, ii, 338-339. Grey to Coschen, 1 Aug.1911, F.O.371/1163, despt.no.184. Haldane to Spender, 27 Aug. 1911, Spender MSS., (B.M.) Add. 46390.

Grey's language was hardly in keeping with Bertie's assessment of the situation, and it provoked a strongly worded rejoinder from him. He wrote to Nicolson on 6 August that he could understand that the British government should wish to divert the German 'land hunger' from their possessions, of which he had not noticed any desire to divest themselves, and he quite appreciated the 'anxiety that France should on the present occasion give some morsels to keep away the wolves from an attack on the fold in which we should have to be shepherd dogs'. But he considered the suggestions concerning France's pre-emptive rights to be a mistake. The French, he thought, would suspect 'that we hope that if we persuade them to make over some of those rights to Germany we may ourselves have a deal with her.'¹¹⁰

Kiderlen-Wächter's decision to abandon Germany's original demands, and to seek instead territorial access for the German Cameroons to the Congo river, and a strip of territory to the north of Libreville, did not bring Bertie any joy.¹¹¹ But while he found de Selves to be worried about the likely reaction of French colonialists to such concessions, Caillaux appeared to be confident of overcoming such domestic opposition. Indeed, both Frenchmen seemed to be personally disposed towards accepting such an extension of Germany's possessions as would carry her influence as far east as the confines of the Bahr-el-Ghazal.¹¹² Grey, however, made no objection when he was warned of this by Paul Cambon. He observed to Mallet on 5 August that he did not think it mattered whether Germany or France were Britain's neighbours in Africa. It was no

110. Bertie to Nicolson, 6 Aug. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 464.

111. J. Cambon to de Selves, 1 Aug. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, no. 134. Bertie to Grey, 2 Aug. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 451.

112. Bertie to Grey, 3 Aug. 1911; Nicolson to Grey, 4 Aug. 1911; B.D., vii, nos. 454 and 458. De Selves did, however, take the trouble to find out how the British government might react to such a cession. He informed Jules Cambon that although the British government would not obstruct it, they would not welcome Germany as a neighbour. De Selves to P. Cambon, 4 Aug. 1911; de Selves to J. Cambon, 7 Aug. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 141 and 151.

doubt preferable, he thought, to have the weaker power as a neighbour, but he did not consider that he could press the objection.¹¹³

More cautious than Grey on this issue, Eyre Crowe was perturbed over the prospect of a large augmentation of German territory, and on 8 August he minuted on a telegram from Bertie, which gave details of the proposed changes, that it was a pity that Bertie had offered no comment upon them. 'He is so fully cognizant', Eyre Crowe observed, 'of the complicated history of the partitioning of Africa in recent years, that his opinion on the effects of such an arrangement would have been particularly valuable'.¹¹⁴ In fact Bertie had already explained his views to Nicolson in his letter of 6 August. There he raised again the objections which he had previously made in connexion with the French reversionary claims on the Congo Free State. While he conceded that it was unfortunate that Germany had arrived too late for the 'feast of spoils', he could not see that it would be of advantage to Britain that a 'powerful Germany should stand in the shoes of a weak Belgium in the Congo State in whole or in part'. If Germany could reach the upper waters of the Congo, he concluded, 'she will become the neighbour of small potentates who at her instigation and with her assistance might give us trouble in the Egyptian Soudan'. Likewise, he deprecated the idea of a partition of the Portuguese colonies, and the consequent alienation of Portugal.¹¹⁵

There is some evidence that Bertie was acting independently of Grey in this matter. Faced with Grey's readiness to acquiesce in Germany's aggrandizement in Africa, he may have been led to encourage the French government to resist Kiderlen-Wächter's demands. This, at least, is what Caillaux claimed in his memoirs. He recorded that Bertie warned him that England would allow Germany

113. Grey to Mallet, 5 Aug.1911, B.D., vii, nos.459-461.

114. Bertie to Grey, 5 Aug.1911, and minute by Eyre Crowe, B.D., vii, no.460.

115. Bertie to Nicolson, 6 Aug.1911, B.D., vii, no.464.

to take all colonies she desired so long as they were French ones, and had urged upon him the impossibility of France ceding one of her colonies. Bertie, he asserted, had accused the Liberal government of being small minded and incapable of seeing beyond the end of their noses. He had, Caillaux wrote, told him that the British government would be forced to follow France if he took the lead.¹¹⁶ Yet, while it is evident that Bertie held views that were quite contrary to those of Grey on the subject of Germany's role in Africa, some exaggeration must be allowed for on Caillaux's part. Relations between the two men were soured by an unhappy disagreement in the autumn of 1911, and the black portrait painted by Caillaux of Bertie in his books Agadir and Mes Mémoires probably reflects the grudge which he continued to feel against him. Moreover, Mes Mémoires was completed after Caillaux had read the pungent criticisms made of him by Bertie both in his published diary and in those of his letters which appeared in the British Documents on the Origins of the War. His contentions that Bertie was complacent about the prospect of a European war, and that the ambassador counted upon him 'pour mettre le feu aux poudres' were part and parcel of an attempt to defend his own diplomacy.¹¹⁷

Yet Caillaux was not alone in remarking upon the immoderate tone of Bertie's language. In a letter of 28 September the German ambassador at Paris complained to Bethmann Hollweg of Bertie's 'hetzerische Tätigkeit' against Germany, which, he claimed, had

116. Caillaux, ii, 137-138.

117. In his account of the Agadir crisis Caillaux wrote of Bertie: 'On dit bien qu'il verrait sans déplaisir un conflit éclater entre la France et l'Allemagne; il est dans l'état d'esprit que l'on prête à certains grands fonctionnaires anglais du Foreign Office. Inquiets du développement de l'Allemagne, ils envisagent avec complaisance la guerre européenne à laquelle ils entendent que l'Angleterre prendra part'. J. Caillaux, Agadir, ma politique extérieure (Paris, 1919), pp. 138-139. There are many references to Caillaux in Bertie's published diary. Most of them are of a critical and unsympathetic nature. See for instance Gordon Lennox, i, 35-36, 224, 276 and 349.

become so notorious that 'sie selbst bei Franzosen auffälliges Kopfschütteln erregt'. Von Schoen admitted, however, that only a diminishing number of people took Bertie seriously, and he could not be counted as a dangerous opponent.¹¹⁸

It is true that Bertie saw advantages for Britain in the continuing friction between France and Germany, but he had no interest in helping to foment a European war. He hoped rather that German ambitions in Africa might be contained by the maintenance of a common accord between Britain and France, such as he believed had restrained Germany in 1905 and 1906. When in mid-August it seemed likely that the Germans would attempt to extend their position in Morocco, Bertie gave no encouragement to Caillaux's proposal that if they increased their naval force at Agadir, the French should send ships to Saffi and Mogador.¹¹⁹ No doubt aware of the problems that it would create for Grey in the cabinet, he warned de Selves on 22 August against giving colour to the assertion of the German press that France was taking possession of Morocco without justification. It was most important, he added, that 'France should not give an opening to the accusation of bringing on a conflict'.¹²⁰

Kiderlen-Wächter's absence from Berlin during the latter part of August provided the French government with the opportunity to reformulate their requirements with regard to their negotiations with Germany. When, however, Jules Cambon arrived in Paris on 21 August, he found that Caillaux and de Selves were anything but

118. Von Schoen to Bethmann Hollweg, 28 Sept. 1911, G.P., xxix, no. 10651. An article which appeared in the Deutsche Tagezeitung in November 1911 claimed that Bertie had done everything imaginable to induce the French government to put forward unacceptable demands and to induce as hostile a tone as possible into Franco-German relations. Extract from Deutsche Tagezeitung in Goschen to Grey, 5 Nov. 1911, F.O. 371/1161, despt. no. 365.

119. Bertie to Grey, 21 Aug. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 498.

120. Bertie to Grey, 22 Aug., 23 Aug., and 24 Aug., 1911, B.D., vii, nos. 510, 512 and 515.

but united on the course they should pursue. Relations between them were strained as the result of the Quai d'Orsay's discovery of the contact established by Caillaux with the German embassy, and the premier's endeavour to secure for himself and his cabinet colleagues greater control over the conduct of the country's foreign policy.¹²¹

Before the final week of August Bertie appears to have been quite ignorant of Caillaux's unofficial dealings with the Germans. Even when he did receive some information on the subject, it was of a rather confusing kind. It came initially from de Selves, who told Bertie on 25 August that Schoen had cancelled a meeting at the Quai d'Orsay on the grounds that Caillaux had asked to see him, but that the premier, when challenged, had claimed that the initiative had been taken by the German ambassador.¹²² From a 'financial friend' Bertie also learned that Schoen had for sometime been trying to communicate with Caillaux 'with the notion that he might be easier to deal with than M. de Selves'. All, however, that Bertie deduced from this was that some financier, thinking that it would be a good thing to establish direct relations between Caillaux and Schoen, had stated to each that ~~the one~~ would like to see the other.¹²³

Despite Caillaux's intervention in de Selves' province, Jules Cambon was far from satisfied with the instructions which he took back with him to Berlin. On 1 September he complained to Goschen, his British colleague, that the French government did not seem to realize 'the enormous advantage of a free hand in Morocco', nor the fact that they must 'pay handsomely for it'. De Selves, he feared,

121. Binion, p.41. Notes de M.Jules Cambon, D.D.F.2, xiv, annexe, 755-758.

122. Bertie to Grey, 25 Aug.1911, B.D., vii, no.517.

123. Bertie to Grey, 21 Aug.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Only in October 1911 does Bertie appear to have gained a clearer picture of what had passed between Caillaux and the German government. He learned then from a 'private and quite reliable source' that 'an emissary from Berlin' with whom he was familiar had been acting as an intermediary between Caillaux and Kiderlen-Wächter. Bertie to Grey, 12 Oct.1911, tel., Grey MSS., F.O.800/52.

was too much under the influence of his advisers and the colonial party, and needed stiffening by a little advice from without. He begged that Grey should therefore instruct Bertie to press upon Caillaux and de Selves that it would be wiser for them to be very generous in their territorial offers, and at all costs to make such proposals as there would be some chance of the Germans accepting. Bertie, Jules Cambon observed, 'would heartily enjoy giving such advice "et catégoriquement"', and coming direct from Grey it would have a more considerable effect than if it were to go through his brother Paul.¹²⁴

Grey agreed with Jules Cambon, and thought it 'sheer unreason' to make the difference between peace and war dependent upon the triangle of territory between the rivers Sangha, Alima, and Wesso, which the Germans were demanding. Thus on 4 September he explained to Bertie what had passed at Berlin, and warned him the extent to which British support would be forthcoming if trouble were ahead 'must depend upon it being clear that France had no reasonable and honourable way of avoiding it'. He would be glad, he informed Bertie, if he would take any moment he considered opportune to inform the French leaders of his views.¹²⁵ But Bertie did not rejoice at the chance to intervene with de Selves. Instead, he protested to Nicolson that Jules Cambon's suggestion was a 'foolish idea'. The French ambassador, he suspected, had either had his

124. Goschen to Grey, 1 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 526. Goschen to Nicolson, 1 Sept. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/350. Jules Cambon had found his own efforts to persuade de Selves to make greater concessions to Germany frustrated by the officials of the Quai d'Orsay. Indeed in his opinion Maurice Herbette was opposed to any kind of negotiation with Germany. Paul Cambon shared his brother's sentiments. He wrote to de Selves that the Quai d'Orsay were attempting to impose on Jules 'une attitude de casseur d'assiettes, ce que, dans le verbiage de vos antichambres, on appelle une attitude vraiment patriotique, car, on confond toujours la brutalité avec l'énergie'. Notes de M.J. Cambon, D.D.F.2, iv, annexe 759-760. P. Cambon to de Selves, D.D.F.2, xiv, no. 274.

125. On 5 September Grey himself asked Paul Cambon if France could not give Germany the triangle of territory for which she was asking. Grey to Bertie, 4 Sept. and 5 Sept. 1911. B.D., vii, nos. 531 and 532. Grey to Bertie, 5/6 Sept. 1911, tel. Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/160.

advice rejected by the government, or had been afraid to give it lest it were rejected. There might, he thought, be parliamentary or other objections of which Jules Cambon was not aware. Besides, he had no wish to place Grey or himself in the same position as Izvolsky, whose recent advice to the French government to increase their offer to Germany had been much resented. He therefore insisted that before acting on Grey's instructions, he must first ascertain the state of the Franco-German negotiations, and the reasons for the French refusal to grant the line of the Alima.¹²⁶

Bertie also countered Goschen's argument that Britain might by inducing the French to make larger concessions strengthen her own position in future negotiations. To be of utility, he reasoned, the Germans would have to know that the French had conceded the line of the Alima under pressure from Britain. The British government would then, he observed to Grey, bear the odium of having urged France to make sacrifices to Germany for the benefit of British interests. If the Germans should subsequently repudiate their convention with France on Morocco, French public opinion would hold Britain responsible for the deception.

When on 7 September Bertie approached de Selves on the subject of the negotiations, the foreign minister insisted that the German demands were intended to humiliate France, and that no further concessions could be made. Yet, instead of following Grey's instructions and informing de Selves of his views, Bertie limited himself to the observation that the Germans might press their demands to the point of overt menaces of war, and an inquiry as to whether France would consider further concessions.¹²⁷ This

126. Bertie to Nicolson, 12 Sept. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bertie to Grey, 6 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, no.503. Izvolsky had proposed that the Austrian emperor might arbitrate between France and Germany. According to Bertie he had also suggested that Germany might be admitted to a share in Morocco. Bertie to Grey, 23 Aug., 29 Aug., 1 Sept., and 17 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, nos.495,497,498,499, and 554. Bertie to Grey, 14 Jan. 1912, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187.
127. Bertie to Grey, 6 Sept. and 7 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, nos.503 and 534.

satisfied Nicolson, who all along had hoped that Bertie would keep Grey's instructions in his pocket.¹²⁸ Even the foreign secretary was prepared to credit Bertie with having acted with 'wise discretion'. Nevertheless, he emphasized to Bertie in a letter of 8 September that it was essential that before it came to hostilities it should be clear that Germany had meant war and forced it on France. Otherwise, he thought, public opinion might prevent a British intervention.¹²⁹

One other solution which was offered to Grey was that suggested by G. Paish, a joint editor of the Statist. On 5 September he told Eric Drummond, who was then a clerk in the Foreign Office, that he had reason to believe that if matters came to a deadlock between France and Germany, Taft, the president of the United States, would be willing to act as an arbitrator.¹³⁰ Evidently pleased with this suggestion, Grey wrote to Bertie on the 8th that it would be very desirable that France should be willing to let Taft arbitrate or mediate if the situation became acute. Although he did not believe that the time was right to mention the idea, he concluded that 'before we go to extremes, if extremes are to come, I shall have to suggest this'.¹³¹ But Bertie found this proposal almost as disturbing as that made by Jules Cambon, and he advised Grey to leave to Taft the entire credit or odium of putting forward and supporting the idea. The French, he thought, would not accept it unless it were accompanied by a British warning to them that they would give no further assistance. Moreover, the negotiation of Taft's terms of reference would take a long time, and Bertie feared that relations between France and Germany would simply continue to deteriorate. If only the question of compensation

128. Nicolson to Goschen, 12 Sept. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/350. Nicolson to Grey, 20 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 560. Nicolson to Bertie, 21 Sept. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/182.

129. Grey to Bertie, 8 Sept. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/171. Grey to Bertie, 8 Sept. 1911, tel., Grey MSS., F.O. 800/52.

130. Drummond to Bertie, 6 Sept. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/182. Grey to Bertie, 11 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 544.

131. Grey to Bertie, 8 Sept. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/171.

were left to arbitration, whatever were allotted to Germany, would, he presumed, be sure to cause dissatisfaction in France where public opinion would make Britain the scape-goat for having urged her to accept it.¹³²

Nicolson considered Bertie's argument to be quite convincing. The question he considered to be too complex and too varied to be referred to arbitration, but he warned Bertie that the public were so bitten by the idea that they would consider the party who refused it to have placed themselves entirely in the wrong.¹³³ Moreover, while Grey found much force in what Bertie had advised, and denied that he had any intention of being a 'medium for conveying Taft's offer', he nevertheless believed that a French acceptance of arbitration would aid them in obtaining British support. Were Germany to refuse arbitration, then he believed that France's moral advantage would be great, and 'very material support to France if war followed would be certain'. He agreed, however, that if the negotiations broke down he would propose a conference, and not mention arbitration.¹³⁴

Neither a conference nor arbitration were to prove necessary. The negotiations at Berlin again looked as if they would founder when on 7 September Kiderlen-Wächter presented Jules Cambon with proposals which provided for what would have amounted to an indirect participation by Germany in the government of Morocco, and a German zone of economic influence in the south of the country.¹³⁵ Faced, however, by a financial crisis at Berlin and the prospect of having to risk a war in which Germany could only rely upon the luke-warm support of Austria-Hungary, Kiderlen-Wächter withdrew his demands on 19 September.¹³⁶ Some three weeks

132. Bertie to Grey, 17 Sept.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/182.

133. Nicolson to Bertie, 21 Sept.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/182.

134. Grey to Bertie, 20 Sept.1911, B.D., vii, no.561.

135. Bertie to Grey, 8 Sept. and 12 Sept.1911; Goschen to Grey, 8 Sept.1911; B.D., vii, nos.537, 545 and 538.

136. Poidevin, pp.630-635. Fischer, pp.54-88. Goschen to Grey, 19 Sept.1911, B.D., vii, no.555.

later a Franco-German convention on Morocco was initialled. There were still difficulties over the exact extent of the territorial concession which France would grant to Germany in the Congo, and the governments in both countries had to reckon with public opposition to an arrangement which appeared to sacrifice their national interests. Nevertheless, by a treaty signed at Frankfurt on 4 November 1911 agreement was reached on the compensation which Germany should receive for disinteresting herself in Morocco and recognizing there a de facto French protectorate.¹³⁷

Bertie was overjoyed at the news that the Germans had climbed down; a decision which he thought was in part due to the weakness of their financial position. 'I understand', he observed to Nicolson on 19 September, 'the Germans have spent money in setting up their machinery to become rich, but they have not enough to run it properly, and get what they want from France and England'. Yet despite this rather primitive assessment of the weakness of her economy, Bertie still reckoned Germany to be a menace to the peace of Europe. His own interpretation of the preceding crisis was that it had resulted from a German miscalculation of the likely reaction of Britain and France to the raising of the Moroccan question. The fact that they had done so with 'such a "geste" as the Agadir coup' only reinforced his view. Moreover, Germany's retreat seemed very much to Bertie like a victory for his advocacy of common resistance to her demands. The Emperor William and Bethmann Hollweg had, he imagined, recognized that France would have Russian aid and most probably British assistance, and had not judged the moment propitious for war. Instead, he thought that

137. Genevieve Tabouis, The Life of Jules Cambon (English edition, London, 1938), pp.220-230.

they would wait until a more favourable opportunity arose.

He warned Nicolson:

It is not a pleasant prospect, an armed truce waiting for the moment when the German Government may think that the time had come to realise their dreams. They have pretty well disclosed what their aims are. Meanwhile they will set about improving their artillery and getting up aviation and building more ships.

There was, however, in Bertie's estimation one ray of hope: the German character. Luckily, he thought, the German was an 'awkward fellow', who spoiled his game by 'maladresse and brutality, and by lies and misrepresentation which must be discovered'.¹³⁸

German diplomacy was not all that bothered Bertie. During the summer of 1911 he had again tried to avoid a situation in which the French government might be given just cause to doubt the value of their understanding with England. To that end he had taken full advantage of the discretion left to him by Grey in communicating his views to de Selves, and he had objected to any suggestion that Britain might press the French to concede on any specific point. Ultimately the entente survived the crisis of July and August. But Bertie soon had to reckon with a fresh clash of interests between Britain and France. In the autumn of 1911 Morocco ceased to be a Franco-German problem and reverted to being an Anglo-French one.

138. Bertie to Nicolson, 19 Sept. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

Chapter VIII.The partition of Morocco.

The Franco-German accord of 4 November 1911 did not present France with a completely free hand in Morocco. Her actions there were still limited by the engagements which she had previously undertaken towards Great Britain and Spain. Of special importance were those which related to the nature and extent of the Spanish zone of influence there, and the future status of Tangier. During the autumn of 1911 Bertie, who had persistently taken a keen interest in the strategic aspects of the Moroccan question, was to become deeply involved in the problems to which the implementation of these agreements gave rise. When the French government began to balk at their fulfillment, Grey protested. This not only resulted in friction between Britain and France: it also provided the basis for a personal dispute between Bertie and Caillaux.

The Franco-Spanish convention of 3 October 1904, the terms of which had been formally communicated to the Foreign Office, had complemented that which had been concluded between Britain and France in the previous April. Spain had thereby been accorded a northern and a southern zone of influence in Morocco, both of which were to be administered by her in the event of the collapse of the sultan's authority. Moreover the agreement also provided that Tangier was to keep the 'special character which the presence of the diplomatic corps and its municipal and sanitary institutions have given it': an arrangement which was assumed by the British government to mean that the city would be placed under inter-

national supervision.¹

The accords concluded in 1904 and the notes exchanged with Spain and France in 1907 satisfied the principal strategic requirements of Britain in the western Mediterranean. Nevertheless, Bertie still considered that there was room for improvement, and in September 1911 he tried to persuade Grey to seek an extension of the area covered by the non-fortification provisions of the Anglo-French agreement. Recalling Langdowne's earlier attempts to secure French assurances on the non-fortification of the whole of the Atlantic coast of Morocco, he on 28 September suggested to Grey that the government should take advantage of French proposals for and exchange of territory in west Africa in order to obtain such an undertaking from France. He also recommended that the French should be reminded of the notes exchanged in 1907, and that it should be proposed to them that the same policy be adopted with respect to any other part of the Moroccan coast. The British government, he thought, should intimate to the French that they would consider the fortifications of any port on the Moroccan coast as constituting a material change in the status quo, and of the relative position of the three powers party to the accords of 1907.²

Bertie's proposals were greeted with little enthusiasm by the Foreign Office. Nicolson, who thought that the two issues

1. Graham H. Stuart, The International City of Tangier (Stanford, California, 1955), pp. 56-59.

2. Bertie to Grey, 28 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 567. On 20 August Caillaux asked Bertie if the British government would be prepared to envisage an exchange of territories in west Africa with a view to maintaining a direct communication between the northern part of the French Congo and the sea. The British government were prepared to consider this. When, however, on 19 September de Selves submitted to them a detailed French scheme, it seemed to go beyond the original proposals. The matter was subsequently referred by Grey to an inter-departmental committee. Bertie to Grey, 19 Sept. 1911, F.O. 367/227, private. Bertie to Grey, 20 Aug., 21 Aug., and 19 Sept. 1911, with minutes; Grey to Bertie, 21 Aug. 1911; F.O. to Admiralty, 6 Oct. 1911; B.D., vii, nos. 485, 488, 558, 487 and 581

of a territorial exchange and a non-fortification agreement should be dealt with separately, wrote to Bertie on 5 October that it was too early to deal with this, and that it should be raised when the subject of Britain's concurrence in a Franco-German agreement was brought up.³ A protest from Bertie, that if they waited until the conclusion of such an arrangement, they would have no means of putting pressure upon France, went unheeded.⁴ Ultimately, however, the validity of his argument became apparent in London, for on 3 November both the War Office and the Admiralty informed Grey of the desirability of securing from France a formal pledge not to fortify the Moroccan coast to the south of the Sebou.⁵ In the event, Grey found it impolitic to attach such a condition to the recognition of a French protectorate in Morocco.⁶

But if Grey was reluctant to propose changes to the convention of 1904, the French government did not feel themselves bound to fulfill all their obligations towards Britain and Spain. Circumstances had changed during the previous seven years, and in order to avoid the lengthy process of a military conquest, the French now sought to maintain, at least in name, the sovereignty of the sultan throughout the empire. This raised the awkward constitutional problem of defining what would be the relationship between the sultan and the Spanish authorities in their sphere.⁷ Moreover,

3. Minutes on Bertie to Grey, 28 Sept. 1911, *ibid.* Nicolson to Bertie, 29 Sept. 1911, *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/173. Nicolson to Bertie, 5 Oct. 1911, *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/160.

4. Bertie to Nicolson, 7 Oct. 1911, *B.D.*, vii, no.582.

5. Admiralty to F.O., 3 Nov. 1911, *B.D.*, vii, no.620. War Office to F.O., 3 Nov. 1911, F.O.371/1167.

6. Daeschner to Grey, 3 Nov. 1911 and minutes; Grey to Bertie, 14 Nov. 1911; F.O. to War Office and Admiralty, 14 Nov. 1911; *B.D.*, vii, nos.619, 683 and 687.

7. Herbette to Geoffray, 16 Aug. 1911; Note du Département, 2 Sept. 1911; *D.D.F.2*, xiv, nos. 183 and 244.

the situation was complicated by the likelihood of there being strong public and parliamentary opposition in France, if, having 'paid' Germany, the government now had to agree to Spain's acquisition of a substantial portion of the country. Within the Quai d'Orsay there were several officials who were only too anxious to see modifications to the arrangements of 1904 in a sense favourable to France. These included Herbette, and Regnault, the French minister at Tangier, who was on extended leave at Paris. Their views were opposed by Paul and Jules Cambon, and Léon Geoffray the French ambassador at Madrid, who feared that France might, by taking too hard a line with Spain, push her into an alignment with Germany.⁸

The aspirations of the Spanish government had during the summer of 1911 been frustrated by French diplomacy. Their talks with the French had been suspended after their occupation of Larache and Alcazar, and they had been excluded from the negotiations at Berlin.⁹ Not until August did de Selves, who steadfastly refused to re-open negotiations with Spain before the conclusion of a Franco-German accord, yield to Geoffray's plea to give the Spaniards 'un os à ronger'.¹⁰ On 16 August Herbette sent to Geoffrey a draft Franco-Spanish convention, which foresaw Spain obtaining a position in her zones similar to that which Austria had formally acquired in Bosnia after 1878. The Quai d'Orsay was, however, anxious to

8. In November 1910 Geoffray warned de Bunsen that Regnault 'could see nothing beyond Morocco. His policy logically pushed to its conclusion signified the eventual exclusion of Spain from her possessions and influence along the north coast of Morocco'. De Bunsen to Nicolson, 25 Nov. 1910, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/344. De Bunsen to Nicolson, 11 Nov. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/351. J. Cambon to Cruppi, 22 June 1911, D.D.F.2, xii, no. 364. Bertie to Grey, 19 Sept. 1911, F.O.371/1161, despt. no. 521. Leon Marcel Geoffray had been councillor at the French embassy at London from 1903 until 1907. He was ambassador at Madrid until 1917.

9. Geoffray to de Selves, 27 July, 30 July and 4 Aug. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 116, 128 and 145. De Bunsen to Grey, 19 Sept. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 559.

10. De Selves to Geoffray, 8 Aug. 1911; Geoffray to de Selves, 9 Aug., 12 Aug. and 19 Aug. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 153, 155, 156, 164 and 194.

ensure the security of French communications between Tangier and Fez, and to achieve this, insisted upon the neutralization of that part of Spain's northern zone which lay between Tangier and the Atlantic. After a protest from Geoffray with regard to this point, de Selves sent another draft to Madrid. This substantially augmented Spain's administrative rights in her northern zone, and provided that the Spaniards should not obstruct the passage of French officers and military supplies from Tangier, but it omitted any reference to the Spanish sphere in the south of Morocco.¹² Indeed, de Selves contemplated the acquisition of this by France, and a bargain between the sultan and Madrid by which Spain would give up her establishment at Ifni in return for the absolute cession of an area near Melilla.¹³ Faced, however, by the reluctance of the Spanish authorities to contemplate such losses and opposition within the Quai d'Orsay to any such accord with Spain, de Selves decided to press the matter no further.¹⁴

Bertie, who received from the French foreign minister a copy of the draft convention on 30 August, had some doubts about what France's intentions were with regard to Tangier and Spain's southern zone. But in London the French project met with a favourable reception.¹⁵ While Grey was unwilling to take a definite line about Ifni until after matters were settled between France and Germany, he regarded the draft as an 'honest attempt to remove Spanish grievances'. Spain would, he thought, have to

12. Geoffray to Herbette, 19 Aug. 1911; de Selves to Geoffray, 29 Aug. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 195 and 219. The text of de Selves' draft was communicated to de Bunsen on 30 August. De Bunsen to Grey, 30 Aug., 31 Aug. and 3 Sept. 1911; B.D., vii, nos. 521, 522 and 527.

13. De Selves to Geoffray, 29 Aug. 1911; de Selves to de Billy, 30 Aug. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 220 and 229.

14. Geoffray to de Selves, 31 Aug., 2 Sept. and 5 Sept. 1911; Geoffray to Bapst, 2 Sept. and 5 Sept. 1911; Note du Département, 2 Sept. 1911; de Selves to Geoffray, 7 Sept. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 231, 245, 261, 246, 265, 244 and 275.

15. Bertie to Grey, 1 Sept. 1911, and minutes, B.D., vii, no. 525.

give France some 'reasonable compensation' if owing to French concessions to Germany, the Algeciras powers disinterested themselves politically in Morocco.¹⁶ Moreover, on 26 September Nicolson wrote to Goschen that they had no indication that there was any intention on the part of the French government to disavow their treaty engagements with Spain.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Paul Cambon, who probably perceived what was afoot within the Quai d'Orsay, warned de Selves that Spain had already paid France for her position in Morocco, and was not legally obliged to make any further concession. England, he contended, had in a certain measure guaranteed the execution of the Franco-Spanish agreement, and though she would not oppose French pretensions, she would not press Spain to agree to them.¹⁸

Indications that the French might require something more than 'reasonable compensation' from Spain began to reach the Foreign Office during the latter part of September. In a letter of 27 September de Bunsen informed Nicolson of Geoffray's apprehension that de Selves might withdraw his proposed convention. There were, according to Geoffray, strong influences at work in Paris which were very hostile towards Spain, and these elements, 'the Etiennes, Regnaults, Herbettes etc.', might gain the upper hand.¹⁹ De Bunsen's letter disturbed Grey's officials, and on 4 October he

16. Grey to de Bunsen, 4 Sept. and 26 Sept. 1911; Grey to Bertie, 11 Sept. 1911; B.D., vii, nos. 530, 569 and 543.

17. Nicolson to Goschen, 26 Sept. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/350.

18. P. Cambon to de Selves, 6 Sept. and 9 Sept. 1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos. 273 and 293. But Paul Cambon also suspected that de Selves like Caillaux, thought that France could demand considerable compensation from Spain. He wrote to his brother in December 1911: 'Si de Selves a évolué à la longue, il n'en est pas moins vrai qu'il partageait au début les folles illusions du Président du Conseil sur la possibilité d'exiger des compensations de l'Espagne. Tu te souviens de l'aveuglement que j'essayais vainement de dissiper'. P. Cambon to J. Cambon, 15 Sept. and 16 Dec. 1911, Correspondence ii, 344-345 and 355-356.

19. De Bunsen to Nicolson, 27 Sept. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/351. Geoffray warned de Selves against yielding to influences hostile to Spain. He rightly predicted: 'si on cède on aura outre l'Espagne toujours sinon dangereuse, du moins toujours gênante, l'Angleterre qui réclamera l'exécution des engagements de 1904'. Geoffray to de Selves, 9 Sept. 1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no. 295.

warned Cambon of the importance which British opinion attached to the safeguarding of Spain's rights.²⁰ On the following day Nicolson informed Bertie of de Bunsen's letter, and explained to him his own fears about France endeavouring to 'drive too hard a bargain with Spain'. There was, he now thought, a danger that the colonial party might succeed in France, and that a rupture of the discussions with Spain might throw the latter on to the side of Germany.²¹

Bertie did not believe that de Selves was personally inclined towards being hard on Spain.²² But his confidence in the good intentions of the foreign minister was not shared by George Grahame. In minutes of 7 and 8 October he drew the ambassador's attention to the fact that de Selves' project omitted any reference to the presence of the diplomatic body at Tangier. From this, and his knowledge of Herbette's previous proposal for a neutral zone, he surmised that the French intended that Spain should be excluded from the neighbourhood of Tangier, and that the sultan's authority there should lapse in France's favour. The establishment of a protectorate would, he reasoned, mean that the diplomatic body would disappear, the French would be able to station troops in the city, and could, if it were not for their treaty obligations, turn it into a naval base as they had done at Bizerta.²³

Bertie disagreed with his colleague's conclusions, but he considered them sufficiently important to be transmitted to Nicolson

20. P.Cambon to de Selves, 5 Oct.1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no.404

21. Nicolson to Bertie, 5 Oct.1911. Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

22. Bertie to Nicolson, 7 Oct.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

23. Future position of Tangier, minutes by Grahame, 7 Oct. and 8 Oct.1911, F.O.146/4229.

In a covering note, he observed that as Herbette's project had been dropped it was of no concern to Britain. The French might desire to have a free passage 'through' Tangier for their officers and supplies, but, Bertie added, he could find nothing in de Selves' proposals that could be twisted into giving authority for the French to station troops there.²⁴ This drew from Grahame a rejoinder. On 10 October he reminded Bertie that the French text spoke of officers passing 'from' Tangier. If it were intended that Tangier should be engulfed in the Spanish zone, then, he contended, the relevant article would have been expected to mention France's right to land officers and supplies. From the existing draft it might be assumed that they were already there. The French, Grahame suspected, were probably keeping the issue of Tangier's administration vague and in the background, and when other matters were disposed of and they were tête-a-tête with the Spaniards, they would claim that it had been intended to leave it under the control of Fez.

Bertie remained unconvinced of the validity of Grahame's argument, but subsequent events were to prove that the latter's suspicions were not without foundation.²⁵

During the course of October it became apparent to Grey's officials that the French government were divided on the subject of their relations with Spain and the future of Morocco.²⁶

24. Bertie also maintained that Tangier was included in that stretch of the Moroccan coast which France and Spain were pledged not to fortify, and that an unfortified naval station was always at the mercy of the stronger naval power. The position of Tangier under the existing agreements and those proposed by the French Government, memorandum by Bertie, 9 Oct.1911, F.O.146/4229. Bertie to Nicolson, 9 Oct.1911, F.O.371/1167, private.

25. The future position of Tangier, minutes by Grahame and Bertie 10 Oct.1911, F.O.146/4229.

26. Nicolson to Cartwright, 30 Oct.1911; Nicolson to de Bunsen, 1 Nov.1911; Nicolson to Hardinge, 2 Nov.1911; Carnock MSS., F.O.800/351.

From de Bunsen the Foreign Office learned that Geoffray considered this to be the reason for de Selves' hesitation over the re-opening of negotiations with Madrid. He believed that de Selves was still prepared to offer Spain a settlement based upon the draft which he had shown to Bertie on 29 August, but that others within the government had fallen under the influence of the colonial party, and wanted to restrict the Spanish zone to much narrower limits. Méssimy, the minister of war, was said to have advocated the complete exclusion of Spanish influence in Morocco outside of the presidios.²⁷

The results of the latest deliberations of the French government were communicated to Bertie by Regnault, who, at de Selves' request, he received at the embassy on 19 October. Regnault described to him a new project for a Franco-Spanish accord, which provided for the absolute cession to Spain of a strip of northern Morocco, but left within a French protectorate an area stretching from the east of Tangier to just south of Larache. Thus, while Tangier was to have a municipality of an international character, the city and its environs were to be completely surrounded by territory under a French administration. Such proposals were not in Bertie's opinion likely to be acceptable to Grey, and he endeavoured to make it clear to Regnault and to de Selves that the British government would not concur in the substitution of France for Spain on the Atlantic coast of Morocco.²⁸

27. De Bunsen to Grey, 19 Oct. 1911, B.D., vii, 594.

28. Bertie to Grey, 19 Oct., 21 Oct., and 2 Nov. 1911, B.D., vii, nos. 593, 598 and 599. Grahame again reminded Bertie of the ill-intentions of the French with regard to Tangier. He drew the ambassador's attention to the fact that article 1 of Regnault's draft declaration stated that Tangier should be 'administered under the sovereignty of the Sultan by a municipality having an international character'. He pointed out that when the French talked of the Sultan of the future they meant France. Minute by Grahame on de Bunsen to Grey, 19 Oct. 1911, (communicated to Paris by de Bunsen), F.O. 146/4229. Bertie to Nicolson, 19 Oct. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/351.

Eyre Crowe found it impossible not to agree with Bertie's conclusions, for this French project, he commented, would 'falsify one of the most important features of the agreements of 1904'.²⁹ During the next few days Bertie had the opportunity to discuss this matter with Grey in London. There he learned that Caillaux had taken the extraordinary step of sending to Asquith an emissary in the person of the London correspondent of Le Figaro in order to win his support for taking a strong line against Spain. It had been represented to the prime minister that Caillaux had adopted the proposals contained in the new French draft, and intended to press them on the Spanish government.³⁰

Neither the prime minister nor the foreign secretary indicated any support for the French proposals. Grey showed little sympathy towards the Spanish ambassador when he complained of French conduct, but he informed Paul Cambon on 30 October that once France's negotiations with Germany were concluded, Britain would not be able to support any negotiations with Spain unless they were based upon the agreements of 1904. Great Britain was a party to those arrangements, he observed, and to treat them as if they did not exist would be to 'drag the Entente in the mud, and would have the most disastrous effect on public opinion here'.³¹ Asquith was equally firm, and according to Nicolson told Caillaux's representative that the British government could not possibly support France in any 'hectoring or bullying attitude towards Spain'. When on 1 November Bertie returned to Paris, he did so armed with

29. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 21 Oct.1911, *ibid.*

30. Nicolson to Hardinge, 2 Nov.1911, Carnock MSS., F.O./800/351. Bertie to Grey, 2 Nov.1911, *op.cit.*

31. Grey to de Bunsen, 25 Oct.1911; Grey to Carnegie, 30 Oct.1911, B.D., vii, nos.605 and 611.

instructions to speak 'very strongly' on this point to Caillaux and de Selves.³²

On the evening of 2 November Bertie informed de Selves of the pre-occupation of Asquith and Grey with the situation that would be created between France and Spain if the new project were put to the Spanish government. He recited the argument that the substitution of France for Spain on the western coast of Morocco would not be consistent with British interests. Not only, he said, would it have a detrimental effect upon public opinion in Britain, but it would also mean that she would be unable to support France at Madrid. The new project, he observed, could hardly recommend itself to the foreign minister since it 'contained elements of danger to the foreign policy of France if the Entente was to continue its task of preserving peace whilst protecting the solid interests of France and England'. The British government might, he thought, be prepared to accept such deviations from the 1904 agreement as might be required for 'reasonable compensation' to France, but to put pressure on Spain to accept the new proposals, would, he predicted, throw her into the arms of Germany. Instead, Bertie advised de Selves to return to the draft which he had proposed in August, and to seek compensation in Spain's southern zone.

De Selves proved to be quite amenable to Bertie's diplomacy. Not only did he agree that without British concurrence, the new project must be dropped, but he also admitted that it was the work of Regnault and Caillaux. Moreover, he went on to complain of his treatment by the latter, and the negotiations which the premier had been conducting through agents at Berlin and London. If it

32. Grey to Carnegie, 30 Oct.1911, B.D., vii, no.611. Nicolson to de Bunsen, 1 Nov.1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/351.

were not for the crisis through which France was passing he would not, he said, remain in office.

De Selves promised Bertie that he would prepare the president of the council for an interview with him.³³ When, however, Bertie met Caillaux on the next day he found him to be anything but ready to adopt a more conciliatory approach towards Spain. He complained of her conduct, claimed that France would be justified in denouncing the Franco-Spanish accord, and cast doubts both upon the value of southern Morocco, and the readiness of the Spaniards to part with it. France, he insisted, must have a railway communication between Tangier and Fez which would be free from Spanish interference and authority. In response Bertie again appealed to the need to maintain the friendship of Spain, and he pointed to the 'magnificent domain', which France 'thanks to the support of England' would possess in Morocco. 'Why', he asked Caillaux, 'was he bent on offending Spain and public opinion in England by making exaggerated claims'? To this Caillaux's answer was distinctly hostile. He warned Bertie that if the British government supported Spain in refusing satisfaction to France's claims, 'French public opinion would be greatly irritated and there would be a danger of France and England falling out'. When Bertie protested that he did not suppose the French would be foolish enough to quarrel with England on account of what compensation should be given by Spain to France, Caillaux explained that 'it might not be a quarrel, but that there would not be the same goodwill to England in all parts of the world and on all

33. Bertie to Grey, 2 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. There is no copy of this letter in Grey's correspondence, but there is a minute by Grey which evidently belongs to it. Grey commented: 'Sir F. Bertie handled this subject very well and effectively as usual'. minute by Grey, Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. Bertie to Grey, 2 Nov.1911, B.D., vii, no.614.

questions as now'.³⁴

As both men were to be guests of the president of the republic at a shooting party at Rambouillet on 4 November, Bertie had a second opportunity to tackle Caillaux on the subject of Morocco. A night's reflection did not, however, change Caillaux's mind. Indeed, when that morning he met Bertie at the railway station, he informed him that he had been confirmed in his views. He claimed that representations had been made to him by prominent men of all parties that France must have Alcazar and Larache, and that any change of policy would not be acceptable to the French parliament. When Bertie suggested to him that in view of the 1904 convention he could not fight Spain to gain possession of her zone, Caillaux retorted that there were other ways of getting Spain out: a reply which Bertie interpreted as meaning that France might stir up rebellion against the Spaniards in Morocco, and against their government at Madrid.³⁵

Caillaux also reproached Bertie for his constant references to the 1904 agreements, which, he insisted, had been broken by the Spaniards and were not applicable to the changed circumstances in Morocco. But these, Bertie protested were the basis of the position which France occupied in Morocco, and he repeated his warning to Caillaux that the British government could neither support negotiations at Madrid on any other grounds, nor consent to

34. Caillaux asked Bertie: 'Was France to submit to having her calves bitten by a wretched little Jig such as Spain'? Bertie to Grey, 3 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Bertie to Grey, 3 Nov.1911, B.D., vii, no.618.

35. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. According to Georges Suarez Caillaux told Coudurier, the correspondent of Le Figaro at London, that if Spain did not yield to France's demands he would foment a revolution and bring about the fall of the Spanish monarchy. G.Suarez, Briand, sa vie, son oeuvre, (6 vols.Paris, 1936-1941), ii, 365.

their interests being affected in the way proposed by Regnault. Then, Caillaux observed, 'friendship with England would cost France dear if her legitimate aspirations were to be opposed by England'. He ignored Bertie's assertion that France must have known what her legitimate aspirations were in 1904, and launched himself into a diatribe on the extent of the sacrifices which France had been compelled to make to Germany in the Congo on account of Britain's military weakness. Had 200,000 British troops been available for the support of France, he claimed that he would have rejected Germany's demands. 'It was a question', he said of whether France 'could not have come to more satisfactory terms with Germany without the Entente on Morocco and other questions'. If it had not been for her understanding with England, France, he asserted, 'could long ago have come to terms with Germany'.

Nothing could have been more out of keeping with Bertie's interpretation of the preceding crisis than this. In defence of the entente and British policy, he asked Caillaux if 'it would not be something like the mouse making friends with the cat'? He told him that he thought the safety of France from German attack had been due to Germany's fear of the British fleet, and that if there had been a war 150,000 troops might have been furnished by Britain. These Caillaux thought inadequate, and he dismissed Bertie's claim that the British fleet would guard France against attack from the sea with the observation that this could be done with mines and submarines.

No French minister had ever before spoken to Bertie about the entente in quite so frank a fashion. In two days Caillaux had challenged both the legal basis of the Anglo-French understanding, and the effectiveness of British support for France. Nevertheless, when Bertie questioned him as to whether he thought that it would

be to France's advantage if the entente were to cease to exist, he denied that he had meant this, and explained simply that he thought 'it was being made to work to the disadvantage of French interests'. Bertie's own belief was that Caillaux was worried about his position in parliament, and desired to obtain great gains at Spain's expense in order to defend his policy.³⁶ Moreover, while he found Caillaux's language to be disturbing, he did not accept it 'au tragique'. On 6 November he told Paul Cambon that Caillaux had softened during the train journey, and that he had appeared 'contrarié' when he had informed him that his intransigence had been reported to London.³⁷ Confident that the French cabinet were divided on this matter, he estimated that Caillaux would, if deprived of British support at Madrid, 'reconsider his position'.³⁸

Bertie had one other reason for hoping that the president of the council might be persuaded to see the errors of his ways. Fallieres, who had been informed of what had been said by Caillaux, and who had been briefed by de Selves on Bertie's previous representations, informed the ambassador during the shoot at Rambouillet that he was entirely in agreement with the view that the 1904 accords should form the basis of the discussions with Spain. He also promised to use his influence with the cabinet, and this, de Selves believed, would help bring about a more reasonable regard for the situation by his colleagues.³⁹

36. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1911, ibid.

37. P.Cambon to de Fleuriau, 6 Nov.1911, Correspondance, ii, 552-554.

38. Bertie to Grey, 5 Nov.1911, B.D., vii, no.627.

39. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov. and 6 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1911, tel. Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. Bertie to Grey, 6 Nov.1911, F.O.371/1155, private tel.

The stand taken by Bertie in his conversations with de Selves and Caillaux was approved and endorsed by Grey.⁴⁰ But from London the situation looked grave, for as Eyre Crowe minuted, Caillaux appeared to be not unwilling to contemplate a situation in which the entente 'would no longer play a part'.⁴¹ Nicolson observed to Goschen that Caillaux's criticisms of the entente were one of the 'strangest admissions I ever heard from a French statesman', and Grey on 6 November warned Bertie that they had got to 'keep France straight in this matter, or to part company with her'.⁴² Yet there was still room for optimism, and Nicolson felt sure that Caillaux would be unable to carry either the French president or cabinet with him.⁴³ Eyre Crowe even proposed that it might be suggested to Bertie that he should contact Delcassé, who, as minister of marine, must carry some weight in the French government.⁴⁴

Bertie's own inclination at this stage seems to have been to leave to Fallières and de Selves the task of persuading Caillaux to comply with the British point of view. He certainly frowned upon such efforts as were made by the Spanish ambassador to influence French politicians and journalists in a sense favourable to Spain. When on 8 November he met Perez Caballero, whom he considered to be 'an indiscreet and vain-glorious talker', he delivered to him a homily on the proper conduct of ambassadors.

40. Grey to Bertie, 8 Nov. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 631.

41. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 5 Nov. 1911, op.cit.

42. Grey added to his warning to Bertie the qualification: 'I wish of all things to avoid the latter alternative, but we can only do so by carrying the former. This we shall carry'. Grey to Bertie, 8 Nov. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 631. Nicolson to Goschen, 7 Nov. 1911, Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/351. Minute by Grey on Cartwright to Grey, 6 Nov. 1911, F.O. 371/1165, despt. no. 121.

43. Nicolson to Goschen, 7 Nov. 1911, ibid.

44. Minute by Eyre Crowe, op.cit.

He observed that interviews with journalists and prominent politicians who were not members of the government caused irritation, and in the existing circumstances did no good. Nevertheless, he explained:

If I happened to meet such persons I should not hesitate to express my opinions in conversation if the question were broached and I thought I should do good in so doing, but I should not do anything to give cause for suspicion that I was trying to influence persons in parliament against the views of the French government.⁴⁵

All this was very virtuous, but only ten days later Bertie was openly charged by Caillaux with having meddled in French politics behind his back. The occasion of this confrontation was a gala performance at the Paris opera house in honour of the king of Serbia. Bertie, along with other members of the diplomatic corps, was due to be presented to the royal guests, but on his entering the ante-room to the presidential box, he was acclaimed by Caillaux as 'Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, l'homme terrible'. When Bertie sought an explanation for this address, Caillaux accused him of having waged a campaign against him, which^{had} produced a great commotion amongst the politicians to whom he had spoken. He warned Bertie: 'prenez garde, c'est dangereux'.⁴⁶

This accusation was repeated by Caillaux in Mes Mémoires, where he also stated that Bertie had misrepresented their conversations, twisted and exaggerated his language, and banded his words about in Paris so as to give a false impression of his policy. He confessed that he had dealt Bertie 'un ou deux coups de boutoir', but these, he claimed, were in response to the ambassador's continuous provocation.⁴⁷ Perhaps this was the case. Caillaux

45. Bertie to Grey, 9 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

46. Bertie to Grey, 19 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

47. Caillaux, ii, 192.

subsequently admitted that he felt uneasy in Bertie's presence, and he may well have over-reacted to the protestations of a diplomat who was noted for his caustic tongue. Moreover, Bertie may not always have given a full account to London of what he himself had said to Caillaux. He had, however, no reason for misleading the Foreign Office about the views of the French premier. Indeed, his correspondence with Grey and his colleagues reveals that he had made a real effort to understand and explain the conduct and attitude of Caillaux.⁴⁸

During the period between 4 and 18 November Bertie had spoken on the subject of the Franco-Spanish relations to several prominent French politicians besides Caillaux and de Selves. In a private letter to Grey of 19 November, which was probably intended as a defence against Caillaux's accusations, Bertie claimed that in recent meetings with French politicians he had carefully tried to avoid giving the impression that he was acting like his Spanish colleague. He reported that he had met Denys Cochin, a prominent conservative member of the foreign affairs commission of the chamber at a shooting party on 15 November, and that at a presidential dinner on the following day he had talked with Ribot, de Selves, Delcassé, Etienne, Cruppi, and Pichon. With all of them, he had discussed France's relations with Spain, but, he insisted, in each of these cases he had allowed the politicians to seek him out. He claimed that in conversation he had simply repeated his argument as to Britain's willingness to accept reasonable payment of compensation by Spain to France, and the need for respect for British and Spanish treaty rights. In response Denys Cochin had spoken

48. Caillaux was not, himself, noted for his diplomatic caution. One of his colleagues subsequently recorded that his imprudence of language was indisputable. Messimy, p.34. Caillaux, ii, 135. According to what de Selves subsequently told Raymond Poincaré, Bertie promised to the foreign minister 'ne pas donner plus d'importance qu'il ne convenait à un propos irréfléchi'. R.Poincaré, Au Service de la France: neuf années de souvenirs (10 vols., Paris, 1925-1933), i, 148-150.

to him about the disappointment felt in the foreign affairs commission over the limitations placed upon France's actions in Morocco by the 1904 agreements, and of their reliance upon Britain to bring about a reasonable settlement. Ribot and Etienne had, according to Bertie, stressed the impracticability of the existing arrangements with Spain, Delcassé had been non-committal, and both Pichon and de Selves had referred to Caillaux as a fool.

Bertie had met Caillaux's challenge at the opera house by denying that he had engaged in intrigues against him.⁴⁹ Caillaux, however, continued to believe otherwise, and he stated in his memoirs that as a result of Bertie's activities, the rumour had been spread in Paris that he had warned the British ambassador: 'Nous avons des amitiés de réchange'.⁵⁰ This assertion receives some support in Raymond Poincaré's Au Service de la France. According to information which Poincaré had received from de Selves, Bertie had told the latter that Caillaux had said to him: 'Après tout les alliances et les amitiés sont choses que l'on peut modifier'.⁵¹ Yet this and other reports of what the premier had said to Bertie may have resulted from the efforts of de Selves and Caillaux's other opponents to discredit him. Moreover, Caillaux himself showed a striking lack of caution in tackling this matter, and might even have desired to give the impression that he was taking a strong line with England and Spain. Charles Benoist, a deputy to whom Caillaux boasted of how he had dealt with Bertie,

49. Bertie to Grey, 19 Nov. 1911, op.cit.

50. Caillaux, ii, 192-193.

51. R. Poincaré, i, 148-150. Raymond Poincaré had been minister of finance during 1906. He succeeded Caillaux as president of the council in 1912, and in the following year became president of the republic.

subsequently noted that if he had said only half of what he had claimed to have said, he would have been fit to lock up there and then.⁵²

Caillaux had during the autumn of 1911 to face a barrage of criticism from those who sought to demonstrate that he had been prepared to sacrifice the interests of France for the sake of an arrangement with Germany.⁵³ The reports about his handling of Bertie which were circulating in Paris could also be used against him. This required no campaign of 'papotages' from Bertie, for as Geoffray observed to him on 1 December Caillaux's strident voice and the locality which he had chosen to issue his remonstrance was hardly conducive to secrecy.⁵⁴ Some three weeks later Bertie himself put it to Caillaux that some people had 'probably heard very little and reported a good deal and the story had been amplified and used by his political opponents.'⁵⁵ One such account was given by Ramondou, the presidential secretary general, who claimed that he had heard Caillaux tell Bertie at Rambouillet: 'Après tout, il faut que l'Entente Cordiale me profite, que j'y trouve mon interet; sinon, je me tournerai d'un autre côté, je ne suis pas embarrassé'. As Bertie had no conversation with Caillaux at Rambouillet, this account probably

52. Charles Benoist, Souvenirs (3 vols., Paris, 1934) iii, 167. Pichon subsequently informed Bertie that de Selves had spoken to several people about Bertie's conversations with Caillaux. Bertie to Grey, 8 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Charles Augustin Benoist, was a deputy from 1902 until 1919. In parliament he was one of the principal supporters of proportional representation.

53. A recent study of public opinion in France has, however, pointed out that public criticism of Caillaux was not simply the result of dissatisfaction with his handling of foreign affairs. Domestic factors, especially his proposed income tax also stimulated opposition to him. D.E.Sumler, 'Domestic Influences on the Nationalist Revival in France 1906-1914', French Historical Studies, vi (1970), 521-523.

54. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

55. Bertie to Grey, 29 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

refers to the discussion which they had at the railway station on 4 November. If ~~this~~ is the case, then the statement attributed to Caillaux goes somewhat beyond anything which Bertie reported.⁵⁶

Caillaux's row with Bertie was not without its advantages for British diplomacy. The rumours which it generated publicized the differences between London and Paris over Morocco, and helped to mobilize against the more extreme demands of Caillaux all those who feared for the future of the entente. During their encounter at the opera house Caillaux had already indicated to Bertie his readiness to retreat from Regnault's project, if Britain would suggest something else. Moreover, from a luncheon which he had with Cruppi on 20 November Bertie derived the impression that Caillaux was using his friend and former colleague in order to tender an olive branch.⁵⁷

Cruppi put it to Bertie that since it was in the superior interests of both Britain and France to maintain the entente, they should come to some understanding about what reasonable compensation the French might obtain for their losses in the Congo. In order to reconcile British strategic interests with the French desire for secure communications between Tangier and Fez, he suggested two courses. Either a band of territory should be excised from Spanish occupation and administration for the construction of a railway, or, he thought, the Spaniards might be restricted

56. Suarez, ii, 365. Caillaux wrote in Mes Mémoires of having spoken to Bertie at Rambouillet. But this may also be a reference to the conversation at the railway station. Caillaux, ii, 192. One ~~story~~ that Bertie knew of was that there had been a very hot discussion between himself and Caillaux at Rambouillet. According to this account when Caillaux had explained that he was only joking Bertie had said 'qu' on ne plaisante pas avec un ambassadeur sur les pareilles choses'. Bertie to Grey, 8 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Such reports and the subsequent revelations about Caillaux's unofficial diplomacy explain the accusation made against Caillaux by Eyre Crowe in January 1912 that he had sought to break up the entente and to replace it by a Franco-German arrangement. Memorandum by Eyre Crowe, 14 Jan.1912, B.D., vii, 821-826.

57. Bertie to Grey, 20 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

to the periphery of their zone. This, however, hardly represented a great advance from the position previously assumed by Caillaux. Moreover, that evening, de Selves indicated to Bertie that although the British government would soon be receiving (from) the latest French proposals, he personally did not concur in them, and would be neither surprised nor displeased if Grey were to quash them.

Bertie was disturbed by the claims made by Caillaux and Cruppi that France was only bound to Britain in so far as the Spanish occupation of the Moroccan coast was concerned. To de Selves he subsequently expressed his regret that the French government had not in publishing the secret articles of the Franco-Spanish accord made it clear that this arrangement had been communicated to Lansdowne. More than Britain's strategic interests in Morocco was, in his estimation, involved in the present negotiations. He reminded Cruppi not only of the importance of France fulfilling her treaty obligations, but also of the dangers of fermenting domestic trouble in Spain. If discord between France and Spain were to lead to a revolution in the peninsula, then, he observed, the monarchy would not be replaced by a reasonable republican form of government, but by one of the anarchist species which would not suit the French. Besides, it was important, he thought, to maintain Spain in union with France and England because her ports would be useful in a naval war with Germany.⁵⁸

Before Bertie received any new proposals from the French government, he learned from the Quai d'Orsay that Louis, Geoffray, and others were preparing a new project that would 'snuff out' that of Caillaux.⁵⁹ In fact on 25 November de Selves, with the

58. Ibid. Bertie to Grey, 20 Nov. 1911, F.O. 371/1168, private.

59. Bertie to Grey, 23 Nov. 1911, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/52.

aid of Fallières and Delcasse, succeeded in winning the consent of the council of ministers for a fresh approach to Spain and England on the basis of the 1904 accord. He envisaged an arrangement whereby France would obtain all of Spain's southern zone except Ifni, and there would be a rectification of the boundaries of her northern zone in the Loukkos region. Furthermore, Tangier was to be internationalized; a commissioner was to be appointed by the sultan to handle his relations with the Spanish authorities; and a railway between Tangier and Fez was to be constructed by the French in consultation with Spain, and managed by a company with the power to 'take measures for the security of the line'. These terms, which de Selves outlined to Bertie on 26 November, went far towards meeting the views which he had been urging upon the French government during the past month. He felt confident that Grey would consider them as a satisfactory basis for negotiation.⁶⁰

Cruppi had in the meantime arranged for Bertie and Caillaux to dine with him on 1 December in a private room at the Restaurant Voisin. In the event the dinner was no more than a semi-comic episode in the history of the entente. Since Bertie displayed no inclination to talk about politics, the three discussed a large number of topics ranging from the second empire to Edward VII before Caillaux, who was anxious to join his newly wed wife at the opera, plunged into the real object of the meeting. That was, Bertie observed to Grey, 'to explain away without explaining his past attitude and present policy as regards Spain and the entente, and to "get at" me in order that I might "get at" you'. He held

60. Bertie to Grey, 26 Nov.1911, B.D., vii, no.716. Bertie to Grey, 26 Nov.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160.

forth for an hour, observed Bertie, with Cruppi interceding every now and again to exercise a moderating voice 'like a Greek chorus, ending always that the entente is necessary and must be maintained'. Yet despite this, and Caillaux's assurance that the new French proposals had been drawn up to comply with the British views, the future of Morocco was anything but settled.⁶¹

Bertie's handling of Caillaux won him praise from both Eyre Crowe and Nicolson, and his report of de Selves' proposals was received favourably by the Foreign Office.⁶² But Grey's officials still had their doubts about France's intentions in Morocco. They were especially concerned about the future of Tangier, upon the internationalization of which Grey insisted as a pre-requisite to Britain's adherence to the Franco-German declaration.⁶³ Nevertheless, a note from the French chargé d'affaires of 21 November helped to reassure them on this point, and on the next day Grey wrote to Bertie that the government felt confirmed in their belief that France intended to ensure that adequate arrangements were made for the international control of Tangier by the reference made to it in Regnault's project.⁶⁴

61. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

Bertie to Grey, 3 Dec.1911, B.D., vii, no.781.

62. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 26 Nov.1911, op.cit.

Nicolson to Stamfordham, 29 Nov.1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/352.

63. British suspicions of French intentions with regard to Tangier were generated by the initial failure of Daeschner, the French chargé d'affaires at London, to give any assurance whatever on the future of the port in a letter in which he acknowledged Britain's conditional adherence to the Franco-German convention. Grey to Daeschner, 14 Nov.1911; Daeschner to Grey, 17 Nov.1911, and minutes Grey to Bertie, 20 Nov.1911; B.D., vii, nos.685,686,692 and 693. Nicolson to Goschen, 21 Nov.1911; Nicolson to Buchanan 21 Nov.1911; Nicolson to Stamfordham, 22 Nov.1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/352. Nicolson to Bertie, 7 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

64. Daeschner to Grey, 21 Nov.1911, and minutes; Grey to Bertie, 22 Nov.1911; B.D., vii, nos. 703 and 705.

Grey's optimism was not shared by George Grahame. In a memorandum, which he drafted for Bertie's perusal, he pointed out that the sultan would soon become a French puppet, and that the wording of Regnault's project had provided for the administration of Tangier 'sous le souveraineté du Sultan par une municipalité ayant un caractère international'. This, he argued, would leave the door open to French military intervention, and, he forecasted, the French would use the vague terminology of this declaration to eventually establish themselves there. In a statement, which might well have justified German diplomacy in the previous six months, he claimed:

If France be not rigidly bound by a written text of the clearest nature, it is highly probable that, in the future, we may find it exceedingly difficult to deal with some policy of slow and cautious encroachment on the part of France with respect to Tangier. The French are such past masters in the art of putting forwards "des arguments juridiques" to cover their actions that a power objecting to them had either to give up the attempt to check them or to proceed to some move which brings France up short such as "le coup d'Agadir".⁶⁵

Some credence was lent to this view by the meddling of the French chargé d'affaires at Tangier in the existing administration of the city. Moreover, after receiving Bertie's reports on the importance attached by the 'inspired' French press to Tangier, and his account of the latest French proposals for an arrangement with Spain, Eyre Crowe warned his colleagues against France endeavouring to secure through some legal loop-hole a privileged position there.⁶⁶

65. Grahame added: 'It would be a curious change of rôles, if in the future England had to send a warship to a Moroccan port in order to stop proceedings at Tangier of which the Government disapproved'. Memorandum for the Ambassador by Grahame, 28 Nov. 1911, F.O. 146/4229.

66. Lister to Grey, 26 Nov. 1911, F.O. 371/1169, despt. no. 342 and minute by Eyre Crowe. Lister to Grey, 27 Nov. 1911, F.O. 371/1169. tel. 156. Lister to Nicolson, 27 Nov. 1911, F.O. 371/1169, private. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 26 Nov. 1911, op.cit.

Bertie was given a copy of the new French avant-projet for a Franco-Spanish convention on 30 November, and on the next day he received an annex to this which related specifically to Tangier.⁶⁷ These proposals caused Bertie some consternation as a cursory examination of the map revealed to him that the Tangier district was now to include a belt of territory stretching down the Atlantic coast. Geoffray, who had been responsible for communicating the project to Bertie, attributed this to Regnault, who was still an influential member of the drafting committee, and who wished to exclude Spain from as much of the Atlantic coast as possible.⁶⁸ Yet though the proposals evidently had Caillaux's support, Geoffray hinted to Bertie that de Selves would not oppose an objection from Grey. Indeed, Bertie informed Grey that he thought de Selves would be rather glad of such an objection as it would allow him to demonstrate to the ministry that he was right and Caillaux wrong about the possibility of squeezing Spain. In a private letter to Nicolson of 1 December Bertie urged him not to feel any compunction in cutting about the projects which he had sent to London.⁶⁹

Different advice was received by the Foreign Office from Paul Cambon, who recommended the early acceptance of the new proposals in order to forestall any reversion by the French Cabinet

67. Bertie to Grey, 30 Nov. 1911, B.D., vii, no. 725. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/179. This project did not, however, satisfy Grahame. In a minute of 30 November he noted: '...on the surface it (the draft) has the appearance of arranging an equality between France and Spain as regards their zones. But this equality is like that at the Monte Carlo Wheels, the Bank has an extra chance under cover of "zero". In this case the extra chance is brought in by the mention of the Sultan or the Shereefian administration which of course means France'. Minute by Grahame on Draft Franco-Spanish Convention, 30 Nov. 1911, F.O. 146/4220.

68. Bertie to Grey, 30 Nov., and 2 Dec. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/160. Bertie to Grey, 2 Dec. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/179.

69. Ibid. Bertie to Nicolson, 1 Dec. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/160.

to the previous draft.⁷⁰ On 30 November Bertie had himself informed Grey that de Selves would like to have his observations on the avant projet as soon as possible. Thus while Grey refused to commit himself on the details of the project he did after only a perfunctory survey of its articles by Eyre Crowe, assure Bertie of his general support for the scheme as a fair basis for discussion.⁷¹ This telegram he also showed to Cambon.⁷²

Bertie was far from pleased by the procedure adopted by the Foreign Office. The French project contained no reference to Spanish participation in the proposed Tangier to Fez railway, and no detailed definition of the French and the Spanish zones in the Loukkos region.⁷³ Moreover, the contents of the annex relating to Tangier had been such as to cause Bertie to defer any action on Grey's telegram. Indeed, although the French subsequently made clear their intention of leaving Larache and Alcazar in Spanish hands, their proposals with regard to Tangier were regarded as anything but satisfactory by the Foreign Office.⁷⁴ A detailed examination of the annex by Eyre Crowe revealed that its provisions would enable the French to secure their pre-eminence at Tangier by

70. Nicolson to Bertie, 7 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

71. Bertie to Grey, 30 Nov.1911, and minute by Eyre Crowe; Grey to Bertie, 1 Dec.1911; B.D., vii, nos.725 and 727.

72. Grey to Bertie (undated), F.O.371/1158, private tel. P.Cambon to de Selves, 1 Dec.1911, D.D.F.3, i, no.269.

73. Paul Cambon did not notice this omission until after he had given it to Grey. The project also said nothing about Ifni. P.Cambon to de Selves, 2 Dec.1911, D.D.F.3, i, no.271. Bertie was particularly upset because Grey's views on the avant projet had been communicated to him in a cypher which was known to the French. As a result he thought that he would be made to appear 'plus royaliste que le roi' and would possibly lose credit with the French government. Bertie to Nicolson, 5 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186. Bertie also advised Grey on 3 December that there was no need to hurry in letting the French government have his views on the project. He pointed out on the next day that Caillaux's government might soon collapse. Bertie to Grey, 3 Dec.1911, tel., Grey MSS., F.O.800/52. Bertie to Grey, 4 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

74. De Selves to P.Cambon, 4 Dec.1911, D.D.F.3, i, no.287. Grey to Bertie, 4 Dec.1911, B.D., vii, no.733. Nicolson to Goschen, 5 Dec.1911, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/352.

attributing supreme power to the Moorish government. Bertie was therefore instructed on 11 December to reject the French proposals.⁷⁵

By December it was already apparent to Bertie that Caillaux's administration was unlikely to last for much longer.⁷⁶ Accused of having intrigued with the Germans, Caillaux was also attacked for having conceded more than was necessary to achieve an agreement. On 8 December Bertie wrote to Grey that the word had gone round in Paris that Caillaux 'is not mad enough to be locked up but sufficiently so to be put aside in matters political'.⁷⁷ The appointment of a senate commission to investigate the Franco-German conventions, and the subsequent resignation of de Selves on 11 January 1912 precipitated the collapse of the government. On the 14th a new one was formed under the presidency of Raymond Poincaré.⁷⁸

Bertie was relieved at Caillaux's departure from office. 'He was', he maintained, 'an uncertain and dangerous element'.⁷⁹

75. Memorandum by Eyre Crowe, 3 Dec.1911, F.O.371/1169. Grey to Bertie, 11 Dec.1911, B.D., vii, no.753. Bertie communicated the British government's views to de Selves in a memorandum in which he proposed that the British, French and Spanish governments should agree on the general principles to be followed for the establishment of the municipality, and that the details should be left to the diplomatic body at Tangier. Memorandum by Bertie for de Selves, 14 Dec.1911, F.O.146/4225. Bertie to Grey, 15 Dec.1911, F.O.371/1169, despt. no.605.

76. Bertie to Grey, 4 Dec.1911, op.cit.,

77. Bertie to Grey, 8 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

78. Bonnefous, i, 259-272. Clemenceau, who was a member of the senate commission told Bertie that Caillaux had not only acted behind de Selves' back, but that he had also proposed to Germany a secret treaty. Bertie to Tyrrell, 1 Jan.1912; Bertie to Grey, 14 Jan.1912; Bertie to Nicolson, 18 Jan.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

79. Bertie to Grey, 29 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

Such indeed was the attitude assumed by Bertie towards him that Caillaux, with some encouragement from Poincaré, came to believe that the British embassy constituted a major obstacle to his achieving the presidency of the council again. Yet Bertie later insisted that his personal relations with Caillaux had always been good 'even when his conduct in regard to England and the Entente was foolish and imprudent'.⁸⁰ For the sake of public appearances he readily agreed to exchange visits with him. He also assured Caillaux on 21 December that he was not in the least offended by his language, and that he always allowed for differences of temperament between the Latin and Anglo-Saxon races.⁸¹ In a conversation with his successor Bertie said that he considered Caillaux to be au fond for the entente. He thought that Caillaux liked 'doing a bit of business on his own account...after the manner of financiers'. When he came up against an obstacle to his designs then, Bertie concluded, he was ready in a moment of impetuosity to brush it aside.⁸²

The new premier seemed to Grahame to be a 'very decent sort of man'.⁸³ He appeared to be only too anxious to do all he could to dissipate the ill-effects of Caillaux's 'wild talk', and he informed Bertie of his desire for intimate and confidential relations with England. Moreover, Bertie, who was perturbed about the possible effect upon opinion in England of the recent revelations about Caillaux's secret diplomacy, succeeded in persuading

80. Bertie to Grey, 10 Dec.1913; Memoranda by Bertie, 20 Nov.1913 and 28 Feb.1914; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Lichnowsky to Bethmann Hollweg, 27 Dec.1913, G.P., xxxlx, no.15664.

81. Bertie to Grey, 29 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Bertie subsequently wrote of Caillaux: 'He is very able and resourceful but very impulsive and unreliable. A very good Minister of Finance but a bad Prime Minister, He is very agreeable'.

Bertie to Kitchener, 12 Feb.1912. Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187.

82. Bertie to Grey, 22 Jan.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

83. Grahame to Tyrrell, 23 Jan.1912, Grey MSS., F.O.800/53.

Poincaré to transmit in writing to Grey his assurances of fidelity towards the entente.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the change of government in France did not augur well for the future of the negotiations on Morocco.

Already on 5 January Bertie had warned Grey that since the French government had been brought into line with regard to a Franco-Spanish settlement, it would be advisable to hasten the negotiations which had begun at Madrid. A new foreign minister might, he thought, not be 'so pliable as Selves', and his colleagues might wish to show that they were more careful of France's interests.⁸⁵ There was also the danger, of which Bertie was well aware, that a change of government might allow the permanent officials of the quai d'Orsay a chance to reassert their influence. This seemed all the more likely when Poincaré, who had no previous experience of foreign affairs, decided to act as premier and foreign minister. As Geoffray pointed out to Bertie on 25 January, Poincaré would have too much to do to be able to go into questions affecting foreign affairs in detail.⁸⁶

The news that Regnault, 'l'âme damnée' of the colonial party, was to be chairman of an inter-departmental committee on Morocco

84. Bertie to Grey, 22 Jan. 1912; Bertie to Nicolson, 1 Feb. 1912; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Nicolson to Grey, 15 Jan. 1912, tel., Grey MSS., F.O.800/94. Grey replied to Poincaré's assurances with a private letter. Poincaré to Grey, 23 Jan. 1912; Grey to Poincaré, 28 Jan. 1912; Grey MSS., F.O.800/53. Poincaré, i, 151-152. De Lalaing, the Belgian minister at London, commented on the British reaction to the recent revelations about Callaëx's diplomacy: 'On ose à peine s'avouer aujourd'hui en Angleterre qu'on semble avoir été plus royaliste que le Roi, plus intransigeant que l'ami qu'on voulait soutenir'. De Lalaing to Davignon, 15 Jan. 1912, Belgische Aktenstücke, 1905-1914 (Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin), no. 87.

85. Bertie to Grey, 5 Jan. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/179.

86. Bertie to Nicolson, 18 Jan. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bertie to Nicolson, 26 Jan. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. One of the best accounts of Poincaré's foreign policy before 1914 remains that in G.P. Gooch, Before the War, Studies in Diplomacy (2 vols., London, 1938), ii, 137-199.

was equally distressing for Bertie and his colleagues in the embassy. Grahame feared that he would be all for 'bullying' Spain, and leaving the door open for future harassment in her zone, and encroachments in Tangier. Renault, he thought, would deflect the French government's resolutions, and work 'souviseiment' to achieve his aims. 'A French cabinet', Grahame observed to Tyrrell, 'is such a feeble thing when permanent officials in league with the "colonials" are secretly against its policy'.⁸⁷

Without instructions from Grey, Bertie on 31 January explained to Poincaré his anxiety lest Renault should attempt to resuscitate his ideas as regards Tangier, and 'rattrapper le terrain' which had been lost under the Caillaux ministry. Poincaré promised Bertie that he was intent upon seeing Tangier internationalized, but the problem of Morocco was to continue to bedevil Anglo-French relations for another decade.⁸⁸

After January 1912 Bertie was not closely associated with the question of Morocco, and negotiations with regard to its future administration were for the most part handled by Eyre Crowe and the representatives of Britain at Madrid and Tangier. Not, however, until November 1912 was a convention concluded between France and Spain defining their respective protectorates.⁸⁹ Even then there still remained the thorny problem of Tangier. Some progress was made during the spring of 1912 towards overcoming the initial differences which had arisen between the British and French governments over the establishment of an international administration there. Yet by the end of the summer the two governments

87. Ibid. Grahame to Tyrrell, 23 Jan. 1912, op.cit.

88. Bertie to Nicolson, 1 Feb. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Nicolson forecasted: 'We are likely to have considerable trouble with the French with regard to the future of Tangier...the gentlemen in the French Foreign Office are not at all easy to deal with and appear to have no chivalrous instincts'. Nicolson to Hardinge, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/353.

89. G. Stuart, pp.60-63.

found themselves at odds on all the important points relating to this issue. An attempt by Eyre Crowe in November to overcome this impasse by using Bertie's influence with Poincaré proved to be of no avail. Poincaré was soon involved in the presidential elections, and on 6 January 1913 Bertie warned Nicolson that he did not think that any negotiations with the Quai d'Orsay would be successful if it meant the French having to give way.⁹⁰ It was not, in fact, until the spring of 1914 that Britain and France were able to reach a tentative agreement, and even then they had to await Spain's reluctant adherence. As a result it was December 1923 before a convention on Tangier was finally concluded.⁹¹

Throughout these negotiations the British government clung to their view that they would not recognize a French protectorate in Morocco until they were satisfied that the municipality of Tangier was truly international. The French in their turn protested that all they wished to establish was a viable administration, and they complained at what appeared to be Britain's obstructive tactics.⁹² Nevertheless, at least one French official was prepared to place the blame for the failure of the negotiations squarely upon the shoulders of the Quai d'Orsay. In a letter to Geoffroy of 18 July 1914 Paul Cambon confessed: 'Nous avons essayé de ruser et de nous constituer une situation privilégiée à

90. Ibid., pp.63-65. Nicolson to Bertie, 26 Sept.1912; Grey to Bertie, 18 Nov.1912; Eyre Crowe to Bertie, 18 Nov.1912; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Bertie to Nicolson, 6 Jan.1913, and minute by Eyre Crowe, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/363.

91. The attitude assumed by the French towards British interests in Morocco led Eyre Crowe to protest to the French chargé d'affaires on 16 January 1913 that the French authorities in Morocco 'acted as if they were already masters of the country and attempted to ride rough shod over British treaty rights'. His language pleased both Grey and Nicolson. Memorandum by Eyre Crowe, 16 Jan. 1913, and minutes by Nicolson and Grey, F.O.371/1683. Grey to P.Cambon, 20.Jan. 1913, F.O.371/1684. Memorandum submitted to Austen Chamberlain, 10 April 1926, W.N.Medlicott, D.Dakin and M.E. Lambert (eds), Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Series 1A, vi (London, 1966), pp.851-853.

92. Nicolson to Bertie, 22 Jan. and 29 Jan.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/160. Nicolson to de Bunsen, 8 May 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/365. Note pour le président du conseil, 16 April 1914, N.S.22 (A.A.E.).

Tanger'. It was not in his opinion the least of the follies which they had committed in the Moroccan affair.⁹³

Nicolson in a letter to Hardinge of 18 April 1912 referred to the Anglo-French differences over Morocco as 'more or less minor matters'.⁹⁴ This was a fair judgement for after the withdrawal of Regnault's project, the future of Morocco could hardly be regarded as an issue which was likely to threaten the existence of the entente. Yet it was ironic that a mutual agreement upon the fate of the shereefian empire had been one of the principal components of the Anglo-French understanding of April 1904. Moreover, in a period in which Great Britain's relations with France were to be marred by other long-standing imperial disputes, Grey was to find it easier to co-operate with Germany on just such issues. During 1912 it was the endeavour of Grey and his colleagues to better their relations with Germany rather than the failure to reach an accommodation with France on matters imperial, which was to give Bertie the most cause for concern.

93. P.Cambon to Geoffray, 18 July 1914, D.D.F.3, x, no.528.

94. Nicolson to Hardinge, 18 April 1912, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/355.

Chapter IX.The clarification of the entente.

Bertie had since his appointment to Paris frequently insisted upon the need for Britain to aid France in the event of a Franco-German war. Thus when in the spring of 1912 it seemed possible that Grey might be ready to accept a political accord with Germany, Bertie was not slow to warn him and Poincaré of the dangers of an arrangement that might delay the rendering of such assistance. Yet Bertie had little knowledge of what had been settled by the Anglo-French military conversations, and only a vague notion of the role which the Admiralty envisaged for the French navy in time of war. This did not, however, prevent him from playing an important part in the negotiations which resulted from a French attempt in 1912 to utilize these contacts in order to redefine and tighten their links with England.

The threat of a European war in the summer of 1911 gave a fresh impetus to the Anglo-French staff talks, and prompted Britain's defence chiefs to re-examine their war plans and future strategy. One result of these considerations was a victory for those senior army officers who favoured a military intervention by Britain on the continent over those of their colleagues in the Admiralty who preferred to rely on naval blockades and coastal defences.

1. D'Ombraïn, pp.100-107. Williamson, pp.167-204. The army general staff had already recommended to a sub-committee of the C.I.D. in 1908 that in a war with Germany in which Britain and France were allies an expeditionary force should be sent to France. This proposal had found favour with the committee. M.Howard, The Continental Commitment. The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of Two World Wars (London, 1972), pp.45-46.

But the debate over rival strategies also led to the matter of the military conversations with the French being brought for the first time before the whole of the cabinet. Under pressure from the radicals within the government Grey, Asquith, and Haldane had eventually to agree to a formula which formally stated that the talks could not commit Britain to military or naval intervention and required the sanction of the cabinet.² Moreover during that autumn the foreign secretary had to reckon with considerable criticism from those amongst his fellow liberals who believed that Britain had adopted an unduly provocative stance towards Germany during the recent crisis.³ It was partly in order to satisfy these critics that Grey found it necessary during 1912 to try once more to place Anglo-German relations on a 'less unfavourable basis'.⁴

Already in December 1911 the Baron von Stumm had broached with Bertie the subjects of a colonial accord, and a possible visit to Germany by a 'prominent English public man'. Bertie, however, showed little sympathy for what he regarded as an attempt by the German government to elicit a British proposal which they might accept or reject, as it suited them. 'We could', he told von Stumm, 'at present remain indifferent to the unreasonable feeling against us for we considered ourselves safe from German invasion'.⁵ When, therefore, he learned from London that Grey

2. Roy Jenkins, Asquith: Portrait of a Man and an Era (London, 1964) pp. 242-245.

3. K. Robbins, pp. 344-357. H. S. Weinroth, 'The British Radicals and the Balance of Power, 1902-1914', Historical Journal, xii (1970), 677, J. A. Murray, 'Foreign Policy Debated. Sir Edward Grey and his Critics, 1911-1912' in L. P. Wallace and W. C. Askew (eds.), Power, Public Opinion and Diplomacy (Durham, N.C., 1959), pp. 140-171.

4. But Grey also personally desired to improve relations with Germany. He wrote to Roosevelt in December 1911: 'I wish we could get on better with them (the Germans): it may be easier if they have really settled the Morocco question as far as they are concerned'. Grey to Roosevelt, 25 Dec. 1911, Grey MSS., F.O. 800/110. Nicolson to Hardinge, 1 Feb. 1912, Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/353.

5. Bertie to Grey, 21 Dec. 1911, B.D., x, pt. 2, no. 265.

was prepared to consider the possibility of linking a naval agreement with an early partition of the Portuguese colonies, he was anything but pleased. On 12 January he addressed to Grey a long homily on the evils of German expansion in Africa. Any attempt to facilitate the German acquisition of territories which were not British would, he thought, be attributed by Germany to fear and a desire to keep her away from Britain's own possessions.⁶ But Grey had already informed Metternich in December that it was not the object of the British government to prevent German territories from extending from east to west, across Africa. Indeed, he seems only to have been restrained from advocating the dismemberment of Portugal's empire by the existence of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.⁷

Bertie was squarely opposed to a new arrangement on Africa. Not only was he attached to the ancient treaties with Portugal, but he also considered that her ports would be useful to Britain in a war, and that there was nothing to be gained from alienating her. Similarly he also feared that an agreement with Germany upon the future of the Belgian Congo would only drive Belgium into friendship with the German 'mammon of unrighteousness', and adversely affect Britain's relations with France.⁸ To Tyrrell he observed that he was against giving anything to Germany 'unless in return not for words or even so-called deeds, but for solid territorial advantage to England'.⁹ Britain, he warned von Stumm

6. Bertie to Grey, 12 Jan.1912, B.D., x, pt.2, no.268.

7. Grey to Goschen, 29 Dec.1911; Grey to Bertie, 2 Jan.1912; B.D., x, pt.2. On the origin of the Anglo-German negotiations on the Portuguese colonies and their progress see R.Langhorne, 'Anglo-German Negotiations concerning the future of the Portuguese Colonies 1911-1914', Historical Journal, xvi (1973), 361-387. P.H.S. Hatton, 'Harcourt and Solf: the Search for an Anglo-German Understanding through Africa, 1912-1914', European Studies Review, i, (1971), 123-145. The subject is also dealt with in the context of Anglo-Portuguese relations in J.D.Vincent-Smith, 'The Anglo-German Negotiations over the Portuguese Colonies in Africa, 1911-1914', Historical Journal, xvii (1974), 620-629.

8. Bertie to Grey, 12 Jan.1912, B.D., x, pt.2, no.268.

9. Bertie to Grey, 21 Dec.1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Bertie to Tyrrell, 26 Jan.1912, Bertie MSS., F.O.800/187.

on 11 February, had 'no spare Heligolands which the British public would be prepared to present to Germany as gifts', and she 'could not give away the goods of others'.¹⁰

Grey was evidently unimpressed by Bertie's argument. Anglo-German discussions on the revision of the 1898 agreement continued, and on 7 February Haldane was despatched to Berlin for a 'very frank exchange of views about naval expenditure and other things'.¹¹ This angered Nicolson, who on 8 February was led to 'discharge his soul' to Bertie. He could see no reason why Britain should abandon the 'excellent position' which she had obtained, and he feared the effects that the new initiative might have upon relations with France and Russia.¹² Bertie was also pessimistic about Haldane's mission. It was no more, he thought, than a 'foolish move intended...to satisfy the Grey-must-go radicals'. The Germans, he believed, would not be prepared to abandon their naval programme, and could not anyway be trusted to respect the spirit of an undertaking to Britain. The 'more dignified course', he observed to Nicolson, would be for Britain to go on in increasing ratio to construct against the German building programme'.¹³

Although Bertie did not think that Poincaré and those of his ministry who were in his confidence would doubt Britain's good intentions, he thought that suspicion would be created amongst many prominent political people in France. The French press and public, he warned Grey on 16 February, were very suspicious about the results of the Haldane mission, and if Britain made concessions to Germany for practically no return at all, it would be surmised that there was some secret agreement to Britain's advantage. He emphasized to Nicolson that were Britain to contemplate any terri-

10. Bertie to Grey, 11 Feb.1912, B.D., vi, no.508.

11. Grey to Bertie, 7 Feb.1912, B.D., vi, no.499. S.E.Koss, Lord Haldane, Scapegoat for Liberalism (London, 1969), pp.71-81. Woodward, pp.323-337.

12. Nicolson to Bertie, 8 Feb.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

13. Bertie to Nicolson, 11 Feb.1912, B.D., vi, no.509.

torial cessions to Germany, then France should be kept informed so as to avoid any injury to her interests.¹⁴

As on previous occasions Grey showed no intention of being consciously prepared to sacrifice the well-being of the entente for the sake of improved relations with Germany. He was quite prepared to assure the Germans that Britain had no intention of supporting an aggressive policy towards them, but he insisted that Britain must keep her hands free to maintain the relationship which she had established with France. At the same time he endeavoured to re-assure the French of Britain's loyalty to the entente, and of her readiness to keep them au courant of the discussions with the German government.¹⁵ Indeed Paul Cambon seems to have been less worried by Grey's attitude towards Germany, than by the prospect of French criticism of British policy having an ill-effect in Britain. Like Bertie he thought that British and German interests were too opposed to allow an agreement, and he insisted to Poincaré that if the French were to maintain their friendship with England, then they must obtain her confidence.¹⁶

14. Memorandum by Bertie 16 Feb.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171 Bertie's warning to Grey about the likely reaction in France to the Haldane mission was not without foundation. Gabriel Hanotaux, a former French foreign minister, pointed out in a book which he published in 1912 that the Anglo-French accords of 1904 were, since the settlement of the Moroccan affair, purely of local and secondary interest. Britain, he claimed, was endeavouring to demonstrate to Germany her perfect independence, and readiness to negotiate with Berlin. G.Hanotaux, La Politique de l'Equilibre 1907-1911 (Paris, 1912), p.431.

15. Grey to Bertie, 7 Feb.1912, B.D., vi, nos.498 and 499, P.Cambon to Poincaré, 7 Feb.1912, D.D.F.3, i, no.628.

16. Paul Cambon urged Poincaré to tighten France's links with British. He observed: 'Il faut espérer que les prochaines discussions de notre Parlement ne fourniront pas de nouvelles armes à nos adversaires et qu'elles permettront à Votre Excellence de continuer l'oeuvre qu'elle a si heureusement commencée'. P.Cambon to Poincaré, 7 Feb.1912, D.D.F.3, i, no.629.

Haldane's conversations in Germany did not result in the conclusion of any definite agreement, but his visit did allow both sides to explore the grounds for one.¹⁷ While there seemed to be little prospect of achieving any binding arrangement on the limitation of naval expenditure, there did emerge the possibility of an accord affecting British and German imperial interests, and of an exchange of political assurances on future policies.¹⁸ As a basis for a general imperial settlement the Germans suggested that Britain might cede to them Zanzibar and Pemba, and her reversionary claims on the strip of territory accorded to her in Angola by the 1898 agreement. Germany could then cede to Britain her right to participate on equal terms with other powers in any railway concession that might be acquired between Bagdad and the Persian gulf, and renounce her reversionary claims upon the Portuguese portion of Timor. It was proposed that in Persia Britain might promise to Germany a share in any railway concession she obtained there in return for German diplomatic support in the gulf. As to a political formula, Bethmann Hollweg suggested that both governments should pledge themselves to 'benevolent neutrality' in the event of either being involved in a war.¹⁹

After learning from Grey of the progress which Haldane had made at Berlin, Bertie left Paris for London. There he found the government to be in a 'hesitating state'. Although he believed Churchill, who had recently replaced McKenna at the Admiralty, to be 'against tying our hands', Haldane, Harcourt, and others seemed to be in favour of an Anglo-German arrangement, and Grey appeared to be 'wavering'. Support in the country for an accord with

17. D. Sommers, Haldane of Cloan (London, 1960), pp. 253-268.

18. But Admiral von Tirpitz, the German navy minister, was not really prepared to agree to anything more than a respite in the tempo of German naval construction. Ritter, ii, 179-184.

19. Diary of Lord Haldane's visit to Berlin; Grey to Goschen, 12 Feb. 1912; B.D., vi, nos. 506 and 510.

Germany, he attributed to the 'noisy section of the radicals', and the City financiers who had 'no "patrie"'.²⁰

Bertie could find little that was to his liking in the details of Bethmann Hollweg's proposals of which Nicolson informed him on 16 February. When he saw Grey he protested to him that it would be a 'gratuitous sacrifice to give to Germany Zanzibar and Pemba', especially as Germany had in the past failed to respect her undertaking with regard to the sultanate. He likewise opposed the cession of Britain's reversionary claim in Angola, for it had been intended to use the strip of territory concerned to connect Rhodesia to the Atlantic. The German offers to surrender their reversionary claim on Timor, and their rights with regard to the projected Bagdad to Basra railway, he considered worthless. The Dutch already had pre-emptive rights on Timor, and the Porte, he argued, would have to give its consent to the transfer of Germany's concession in Mesopotamia. On 19 February Bertie had the opportunity to impress these points on Lloyd George and Asquith. The chancellor of the exchequer seemed ready to believe that Britain might be able to secure something in the way of a naval agreement with Germany in return for territorial concessions. Bertie, however, warned him that while the cession of territory would be permanent, an arrangement on armaments might prove to be temporary. Moreover, when Lloyd George suggested that German support might be useful to Britain in the Persian gulf, if, as he thought likely, the understanding with Russia broke down, Bertie replied simply that this was unlikely in view of the fact that the Germans were nowhere near the gulf.

20. Reginald McKenna was first lord of the Admiralty from 1908 until the autumn of 1911, when he exchanged posts with Churchill. He remained secretary of state for home affairs until 1915. Memoranda by Bertie, 16 Feb. and 19 Feb. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

Important as these colonial considerations were for Bertie, the problem which most beset his mind was that of avoiding the conclusion of a political arrangement with Germany which might harm the entente. He admitted to Lloyd George that a 'formula of some kind had become necessary', but he considered that 'it should be of a general and anodyne character'. It had, he thought, better be carefully worded because the Germans could not be trusted for any longer than it suited their intentions. The French he found 'equally slippery', but, he contended, the essential difference between the Germans and the French was that while the latter's interests were now the same as Britain's, those of the former were in opposition to them.²¹

Grey had on 13 February informed Cambon that he was willing to assure the Germans that there was not in Britain's understandings with France and Russia 'any preparation to be aggressive towards Germany or to make an unprovoked attack upon her'. The difficulty was, as Grey pointed out, how to find a formula which would express Britain's attitude and reassure the Germans, but still leave her free to go to the aid of France in the event of German aggression against her.²² In Bertie's opinion Grey had very little room for manoeuvre on this point. He warned the foreign secretary on the 16th that 'if we signed a formula binding ourselves not to join any combination to attack Germany, we might tie our hands very inconveniently as regards France'. German military preparations might, Bertie explained, lead the French to expect an imminent German attack, and they might attempt to secure a tactical advantage

21. Ibid. On 17 February Bertie told the king: 'No Foreign Govt. — the French not excepted — adhered as we do to the spirit as well as the letter of agreements when they work out injuriously to them or contrary to their expectations and that might be the case in regard to any agreement with Germany'. Memorandum by Bertie, 17 Feb. 1912, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187.

22. Grey to Bertie, 13 Feb. 1912, B.D., vi, no. 514. P. Cambon to Poincaré, 13 Feb. 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no. 30.

by taking the offensive and sending troops into Germany. Such an advance, Bertie thought, would be of the highest importance to the French as it would infuse in their troops a spirit which would count much in their campaign. In such an event, Bertie asked, ^{who} would be the real aggressor, and what would Britain's position be if she had promised not to make an 'unprovoked' attack upon Germany? A Franco-German quarrel might be due to Germany who would be the aggressor even if she did not strike the first blow.²³

Bertie's campaigning in London did not discourage the search for a political and naval accord with Germany. Indeed the formula which Grey offered to Metternich on 14 March was far from being to Bertie's liking. Grey proposed that England might declare that she would make no unprovoked attack upon Germany and pursue no aggressive policy towards her.²⁴ This, Bertie feared, 'would tie our hands and consequently diminish our value to France'. In a letter to Nicolson of 28 March he repeated the argument which he had previously put to Grey and Lloyd George, and he insisted that to be effective British aid must be immediate and not hindered by any non-aggression agreement with Germany. If it arrived too late, France's ill-fate would, he reasoned, be Britain's later on.²⁵

Nevertheless, even after Metternich had rejected the British formula, Grey still felt able to tell the German ambassador that the government would be glad to have explained to them what the Germans desired.²⁶ This, Bertie thought, was an indication that the government were prepared to consider a more comprehensive

23. Memoranda by Bertie, 16 Feb and 19 Feb. 1912, op cit.

24. Grey to Goschen, 14 March 1912, B.D., vi, no.537.

25. Bertie to Nicolson, 28 March 1912, B.D., vi, no.556.

26. Woodward, pp. 338-358. Grey to Goschen, 29 March 1912, B.D., no.557.

formula which might mean loosening Britain's ties with France. It would, he considered, be a high price to pay for the temporary advantage of restricting for a short period the construction of German warships. Moreover, if, as he believed unlikely, France and Russia were to launch an unprovoked attack upon Germany, he still thought it important that Britain should be free to decide whether or not it was in her interests to participate. Bertie wrote to Nicolson on 1 April the 'crushing of France would be a great danger to England and it would be detrimental to our interests to have our hands tied by a neutrality promise'.²⁷

What Bertie found equally disturbing was the acquiescence of the French government in the Anglo-German discussions. In part this was a result of their desire not to antagonize the British government over an issue which did not seem to pose any great threat to the entente. Paul Cambon did not believe that there was much chance of the Anglo-German talks succeeding, and neither he nor Poincaré seem to have fully understood the direction in which they were moving. As the result of Cambon's reporting Poincaré was left under the impression that all that Grey contemplated was a verbal declaration to the German ambassador.²⁸ Moreover, although Grey informed Cambon on 22 March of the rejection of his formula and of the difficulties which stood in the way of a British offer of conditional neutrality, he did not explain to the French ambassador that the cabinet had yet to consider a German request for what would amount to a promise of absolute neutrality. Scant attention was paid by Cambon to Grey's suggestion that the question of an accord with Germany 'might be revived at any time'. Indeed, after his conversation with Grey, he

27. Bertie to Nicolson, 1 April 1912, B.D., vi, no.563.

28. P.Cambon to Xavier Charmes, 10 Feb.1912; P.Cambon to J.Cambon, 20 Feb. and 27 Feb.1912; Correspondance, iii, 10-15. P.Cambon to Poincaré, 15 March 1912; Poincaré to P.Cambon, 30 March 1912; D.D.F.3, ii, nos.205 and 276. Izvolsky to Sazonov, 29 Feb.1912, F. Stieve (ed.), Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 1911-1914 (4 vols., Berlin, 1924-1926), ii, no.214.

signalled to Poincaré: 'ainsi s'évanouissent les espérances ou les craintes que les esprits peu avertis avaient fondées sur la visite de Lord Haldane à Berlin'.²⁹

From Grey Bertie learned that Cambon had 'seemed satisfied' with the proposed British formula.³⁰ This Bertie doubted, although he conceded to Nicolson that the French ambassador would have been pleased at 'the German Government having knocked it on the head'.³¹ He felt that Grey, whose policy he claimed no longer to understand, needed strengthening against his pro-German colleagues, and evidently with this in mind he attempted to exert pressure on the British government through Poincaré. Thus on 27 March he approached the latter 'comme s'il n'était pas Ambassadeur', and expressed his surprise at Cambon's reaction to Grey's explanations. The proposed declaration, he warned Poincaré, had been put aside for the moment, but not definitely abandoned. Meanwhile Grey, he contended, was very much weakened and surrounded by supporters of an Anglo-German rapprochement. He explained the dangers which he feared might result from Britain agreeing to remain neutral in the event of an attack upon Germany, and he emphasized the need to prevent an accord on such a basis. 'Il est indispensable', he insisted, 'que Cambon n'ait pas l'air satisfait'. Finally he urged Poincaré that if he were to speak with a little firmness at London, 'on hésitera à commettre la faute que je redoute'.³²

Acting on this advice Poincaré on the following day communicated to Cambon the substance of Bertie's premonitions. It was essential he informed him that Britain should not engage

29. Grey to Bertie, 22 March 1912; Minute by Nicolson, 25 March 1912; B.D., vi, nos. 550 and 552. P. Cambon to Poincaré, 22 March 1912; D.D.F.3, ii, no. 244.

30. Grey to Bertie, 15 March and 29 March 1912, B.D., vi, nos. 540 and 558.

31. Bertie to Nicolson, 28 March 1912, B.D., vi, no. 556.

32. Note de Poincaré, 27 March 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no. 266. Poincaré, i, 170-171.

herself to remain neutral in the event of a French attack upon Germany. A British declaration of neutrality, he insisted, would only incite Germany to renew towards France 'sa tactique traditionnelle de provocation'.³³ Nevertheless, Poincaré confined his objections to the possibility of a British promise of neutrality, so that when on 29 March Cambon raised the subject with Grey the latter simply explained that the cabinet had already rejected the idea of an accord on conditional neutrality, and that it would therefore be difficult for them to accept the latest German request.³⁴ On the next day Poincaré tried to make it clear to Cambon that what Bertie was preoccupied with was Grey's non-aggression formula. But by then Cambon was on the point of leaving London for Paris and nothing further was said to Grey.³⁵

Bertie had done well in impressing his objections upon Poincaré. On 3 April, after having talked with Bertie and Poincaré, Paul Cambon wrote a long letter to de Fleuriau, the French charge d'affaires at London, about the apprehension which both the premier and Fallières felt over the progress of the Anglo-German discussions. Much of the letter appears to have reflected Bertie's views. Grey's formula, it stated, was ambiguous and might delay British aid in the event of a Franco-German war as it would enable the Germanophile members of Asquith's cabinet to equivocate on whether or not Germany's actions could be considered as provocative. The Germans, Cambon suspected, might yet seek some modifications in Grey's formula as would paralyze Britain's actions. An Anglo-German accord might, he observed, also be used

33. Poincaré to P.Cambon, 28 March 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no.269.

34. Grey to Bertie, 29 March 1912, B.D., vi, no.559.

35. Poincaré to P.Cambon, 30 March 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no.276.

by the opponents of the entente in France to create a bad impression on public opinion there.³⁶

This theme was taken up again by Bertie. He warned Grey on 3 April that if his non-aggression formula became known in France, 'it would be a disagreeable surprise to the French public'. Nicolson, who received a copy of Cambon's letter to de Fleuriau on 4 April, believed that Britain was rapidly arriving at a 'very critical moment' in her relations with France. It would, he urged Grey, be disastrous if for the sake of the formula Britain were to risk alienating France and consequently Russia. Yet neither this, nor the efforts of Bertie and Cambon, had any considerable effect upon Grey's diplomacy.

On Bertie's despatch of 3 April Grey minuted: 'Russia and France both deal separately with Germany and... it is not reasonable that tension should be permanently greater between England and Germany than between Germany and France, or Germany and Russia'. He saw no validity in Bertie's argument that Britain's freedom of action would be impeded by a promise to Germany not to engage in any unprovoked attack upon her, and he showed no intention of abandoning the talks with Germany.³⁷ His formula, he reasoned in a telegram to Bertie, would not tie Britain's hands for if Germany 'attacked and forced war upon an ally or friend' of

36. P.Cambon to de Fleuriau, 3 April 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no.295. Aime de Fleuriau was the second, and later first, secretary of the French embassy at London from 1904 until 1921.

37. Bertie further explained to Grey that there was still a small party in France who distrusted England, and that there were all those who would for monetary reasons take advantage of the present situation to point out that England could not be relied upon. Bertie to Grey, 3 April 1912 and minutes by Grey and Nicolson; Minute by Nicolson, 4 April 1912; Nicolson to Grey, 6 April 1912; B.D., vi, nos.564, 566 and 567. Nicolson wrote to Bertie that he was confident that Grey would not sign any formula acceptable to the Germans, but he feared that several of his colleagues 'in their ignorance and shortsightedness would go very far towards pleasing Germany, and they exercise considerable pressure on our Chief'. Nicolson to Bertie, 6 April 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

Britain, it would be regarded as provocation by her.³⁸

Worried by Grey's attitude, Bertie again warned him of the ill-effect that the British formula would have on public opinion in France. He also pressed the French premier to speak with energy at London, and to arm Grey against his colleagues so that he could demonstrate that it was not worth the risk of compromising the entente for the sake of an agreement with Germany.³⁹ As a result on 11 April Poincaré informed Cambon that he might tell Grey that a declaration such as he proposed would be interpreted in France as the voluntary abandonment of the policy that Britain had pursued since 1904. The entente, he observed, was not consecrated by any diplomatic act, and rested solely on the military conversations between the two general staffs. 'Tout qui déconcerterait le sentiment', he concluded, 'serait donc de nature à la détruire'.⁴⁰

Cambon had no need of Poincaré's instructions for on 10 April Metternich informed Grey that in view of the insufficiency of the British formula, Bethmann Hollweg intended to proceed with Germany's projected naval programme.⁴¹ This news reached Bertie on the Côte d'Azur, where he had gone in order to participate in the celebrations connected with the unveiling of statues at Nice and Cannes of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. The occasion offered to Bertie and Poincaré the chance to eulogize on the reigns of the dead monarchs, to praise the goodly state of Anglo-French relations, and to solemnly re-enact the rites of the

38. Grey to Bertie, 9 April 1912, B.D., vi.no.569.

39. Bertie to Grey, 10 April 1912, B.D., vi, no.570. Poincaré to Paléologue, 10 April 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no.318.

40. Poincaré to P.Cambon, 11 April 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no.329.

41. Grey to Goschen, 10 April 1912, B.D., vi, no.573. On the motives behind the German decision see Ritter, ii, 185-191. Anglo-German relations and the naval questions are discussed in more detail in R.Langhorne, 'The Naval Question in Anglo-German Relations, 1912-1914', Historical Journal, xiv (1971), 359-370.

entente cordiale.⁴² Despite the efforts of the Liberal government to better their relations with Germany, Great Britain remained untrammelled by legal technicalities, and free to choose whether or no she would go to France's aid in the event of a continental war. Yet the failure of the Anglo-German pourparlers was due not to Bertie's protestations, or his subterfuge in Paris, but rather to the refusal of the German government to accept anything that Grey felt able to offer them. Moreover, much to Bertie's distaste, discussions continued between London and Berlin in an attempt to conclude an accommodation on colonial matters.⁴³

The continuing dialogue between the British and German governments perturbed the French. After having learned that Asquith had told the Commons on 30 April that relations between Britain and Germany were such that they could discuss frankly and amicably their mutual interests, Cambon professed to Grey to be anxious lest an agreement of a far reaching character had been concluded. Grey had to assure him that this was not the case, and that what was being discussed related only to some territorial arrangements in southern Africa.⁴⁴ In Bertie's view, the French were like 'stags on the hill'. 'They are', he observed, 'more frightened of the danger that they wind, than of the danger they see clearly'. If Cambon could believe that Britain had signed something with Germany, what, Bertie asked Mallet, could be thought by the French who knew the British and their methods less?⁴⁵

42. Bertie to Grey, 18 April 1912, B.D., vi, no. 378. There was a touch of irony about Bertie's presence at the celebrations at Nice and Cannes. When the idea of erecting a statue of Queen Victoria at Nice was proposed by Le Petit Nioise in 1908, Bertie opposed it. He wrote to Grey: 'There can be no guarantee that there may not be, in a more or less distant future, a change in the feelings of friendship entertained in France towards England; and in the event of ill-feeling arising between the two countries, a statue of the sort proposed would be liable to disfigurement and exposed to insult'. Bertie to Grey, 21 Nov. 1908, F.O. 371/456, despt. no. 471. Poincaré, i, 190-205.

43. Nicolson warned de Fleuriau on 12 April, 'les Allemands se montrent pleins de tenacité et ils paraissent souvent abandonner une affaire qu'ils reprennent dans la suite'. De Fleuriau to Poincaré, 12 April 1912, D.D.F. 3, ii, no. 232.

44. Grey to Bertie, 3 May 1912, B.D., vi, no. 582.

45. Bertie to Mallet, 12 May 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/171.

Amongst Grey's officials there remained a lingering suspicion that the Germans, with a view to dividing Britain and France, would again raise the subject of a political formula. This was reinforced by the news that the Wilhelmstrasse intended to appoint their ambassador at Constantinople, the Baron Marachall von Bieberstein, as Metternich's successor. Nicolson feared that the appointment of this experienced and skilful diplomat would not find 'a very sturdy and united resistance on the part of the cabinet'.⁴⁶ His appointment, Mallet concluded, was an indication of the importance which the Germans attached to breaking up the entente, and on 10 May he requested Bertie to write to Grey to deprecate any further discussions on an Anglo-German understanding. While he thought that Grey would stand firm on the subject of formulas, he told Bertie that he thought he would require 'constant reminders'.⁴⁷

Rather than appeal directly to the foreign secretary on this matter, Bertie decided once more to try to use the French government in order to express his own views. He thought it better, he observed to Mallet, that objections should come through him rather than from him.⁴⁸ Thus after a conversation with Poincaré on 15 May, Bertie transmitted to Grey a textual account of what he asserted were the foreign minister's fears about a renewed German attempt to obtain an accord with Britain.⁴⁹ This however, seems not to have impressed Grey.⁵⁰ There was no indication, he told

46. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 8 May 1912; Nicolson to Lowther, 13 May 1912; Carnock MSS., F.O.800/355. Chirol to Hardinge, 7 June 1912, Hardinge MSS., 92.

47. Mallet to Bertie, 10 May 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

48. Bertie to Mallet, 12 May 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

49. Bertie to Grey, 16 May 1912, B.D., iii, nos.585 and 586.

Bertie to Nicolson, 16 May 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

50. Grey to Bertie, 17 May 1912, B.D., vii, no.587.

Cambon, that Marschall's arrival was intended to inaugurate any new departure in German policy, and he rejected Nicolson's proposal that he should assure Poincaré that 'all questions of any political formulas had been definitely and finally abandoned'. Instead, he instructed Bertie to tell the foreign minister that the British government 'were determined...not to adopt any line of policy which would in any way impair the intimate and friendly relations which they desire to maintain with France'. They had, he affirmed, 'no intention of entering into any political engagement with Germany which would have this affect.'⁵¹

During a conversation with Poincaré on 3 February Bertie had spoken of his fears about the general political situation in Europe, and of the need for Britain and France to concert together.⁵² But the readiness of Grey and his colleagues to engage in the search for a political formula which would satisfy Berlin high-lighted for the French the extent to which their entente with England was dependent upon personalities rather than diplomatic instruments. They were already uneasy about Germany's military preparations, and in the opinion of Paul Cambon, her recent diplomacy 'clearly indicated that England was regarded as the Power which held largely the balance for or against peace'. In these circumstances Poincaré appears to have resolved to secure from Britain some written engagement such as would put the Anglo-French understanding beyond question. Thus on 15 April Paul Cambon, with some encouragement from the foreign minister, raised with Nicolson the whole

51. Grey to Bertie, 21 May and 31 May 1912, B.D., vi, nos. 588 and 589. Nicolson to Bertie, 23 May 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Nicolson to Hardinge, 3 June 1912, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/357.
52. Poincaré to P.Cambon, 4 Feb. 1912, P.D.F.3, i, nos. 603 and 605.

question of Britain's continuing support for France.⁵³

Cambon told Nicolson that Poincaré considered it necessary to 'take stock of the position of France and to see what outside support she could rely upon'. Grey's recent assurances, Cambon asserted, had not been 'sufficiently clear and precise to thoroughly satisfy him'. Moreover, while the existing Anglo-French relationship, based as it was upon a community of interest and reciprocal confidence, might be sufficient for the two governments, it was not, he claimed, enough for public opinion in France. Then, after re-asserting that Lansdowne had been ready in 1905 to 'strengthen and extend' the entente, Cambon asked Nicolson if they could not seek a formula which would allow the French government to reassure 'les esprits inquiets ou incredulés'. Although he said nothing precise about what assurances should be given, he did suggest that declarations might be exchanged in note form.

Much as Nicolson would personally have liked to have seen the entente strengthened, he considered that the time was not right for pressing for any more precisely defined understandings. The 'German thermometer was in the ascendant', he claimed, and he discouraged Cambon from making any new proposal. He warned the French ambassador that he doubted if the cabinet would be prepared to tie their hands in any way with regard to the action that they would take in any given contingency at a time when there was much public support for bettering relations with Germany. For the moment he thought that it would be wiser if Cambon were to leave

53. Memorandum by Nicolson, 15 April 1912; Nicolson to Morley, 16 April 1912; B.D., vi, nos. 576 and 577. Nicolson to Bertie, 22 April 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. P.Cambon to Poincaré 18 April 1912, D.D.F.3, ii, no.363. After receiving Cambon's report of his conversation with Nicolson, Poincaré wrote to him that it would have enlightened the British government on the value that France attached to the entente 'et qui nous ferait souhaiter de le voir affirmer par écrit afin que son existence même ne puisse plus être mise en doute'. Poincaré to P.Cambon, 23 April 1912, N.S.27 (A.A.E.), tel.414. Already on 21 February Poincaré had informed a conference at the Quai d'Orsay that 'there was every desire that the military agreements might receive diplomatic consecration'. J.Joffre, The Memoirs of Marshal Joffre (2 vols. translated by T.Bentley Matt, London, 1932), i.52.

matters as they were. The only assurance he could offer was that 's'il survient à un à-coup l'opinion forcera le Gouvernement à marcher'.⁵⁴

If the response to Cambon's initiative was disappointing for the French, the naval question, which had proved to be one of the main obstacles to closer Anglo-German relations, was ironically to provide them with the opportunity to make a renewed attempt to extract from Britain a more formal definition of the entente. The Admiralty's concern with the development of the German navy had already led them by December 1907 to concentrate the preponderant might of the Royal Navy in home waters. But in the spring of 1912 they were faced with the prospect of a further increase in Germany's naval strength, and the development by Italy and Austria-Hungary of a force of dreadnoughts, which would soon render obsolete the British fleet in the Mediterranean, and place it in a very precarious position in the event of a war with the triple alliance. To meet this challenge the Admiralty proposed a re-organization of the fleets, the essence of which was outlined to the Commons by Churchill on 18 March. This involved the withdrawal from Malta of the six pre-dreadnoughts then stationed there, and the formation of a new battle squadron, which would be based at Gibraltar, and be able to reinforce other squadrons in the North sea and Atlantic, or re-enter the Mediterranean if circumstances so dictated. As Churchill subsequently reasoned, Britain's peace-time dispositions would thus approximate to those which it had been intended that she would assume in time of conflict⁵⁵

54. In one sense, however, Nicolson was optimistic about the possibility of Cambon securing satisfaction in the near future. He explained to the French ambassador that the Liberal government would not last long and with the conservatives in office 'vous pourrez arriver à quelque chose de précise'. Ibid. Nicolson to Goschen, 23 April 1912, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/355.

55. Williamson, pp.239-240 and 264-267.

In planning for a future war neither Churchill and his advisers, nor their predecessors had neglected the part which France and the entente might play. The British war plans of 1907 and 1908 had reckoned with the possibility of obtaining aid from France in the Mediterranean.⁵⁶ Moreover, although Churchill always insisted that in the absence of either an agreement with Germany or a substantial increase in British naval expenditure, the new dispositions were the best that the navy could adopt, he also recognized that without French assistance, British interests in the Mediterranean would be dangerously exposed in time of conflict.⁵⁷ When on 29 April Asquith instructed the Committee of Imperial Defence to inquire into the effects of the projected naval changes upon the strategic situation in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, he also requested that they should examine the 'degree of reliance to be placed on the co-operation of the French fleet'.⁵⁸ Before the Agadir crisis there had, however, been no conversations between the British and French naval authorities of a kind similar to those which had proceeded between their military staffs.⁵⁹

56. Ibid. The navy's manoeuvring in the North sea in the spring of 1909, and the withdrawal of the fleet from the Mediterranean also led Mallet to consider the prospect of the Admiralty relying on the French fleet to defend Britain's interests. He warned Grey that it would be 'rash to assume that, without an alliance the French would come to our assistance in these circumstances'. Mallet to Grey, 11 April 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/93.

57. R.S.Churchill, Winston S.Churchill, ii, companion volume pt.3 (London 1969), pp.1503-1505.

58. Enclosures in Hankey to Grey, 29 April 1912, in E.W.Lumby (ed) Policy and Operations in the Mediterranean, 1912-1914 (The Navy Record Society, London, 1970), pp.23-31.

59. A report of the D.N.I. of January 1908 on German naval building had actually envisaged a possible Franco-German naval combination as a factor to be taken into account in calculating the strength of the British navy. Paul Haggie, 'The Royal Navy and War Planning in the Fisher Era', Journal of Contemporary History, viii (1973), 113-131.

Ibid. R.F.Mackay, Fisher of Kilverstone (Oxford, 1973), pp.353-356, Williamson, pp.243-249.

In 1906 Fisher had been reluctant to discuss naval war plans with the French, and only in December 1908 did he indicate to the French naval attaché in London that in a war in which France was allied with Britain, she should concentrate her naval forces in the Mediterranean. Since, however, the French had already decided in 1906 to shift the greater part of their naval strength to the Mediterranean, Fisher's remarks complemented rather than determined the deployment of their fleets.⁶⁰ Even when tentative discussions did begin in the summer of 1911 between the first sea lord, Sir Arthur Wilson, and representatives of the French navy, the net result was only a verbal agreement which included provisions for possible co-operation in the Mediterranean.⁶¹

The attention of the Foreign Office was first drawn to the progress of these conversations by Paul Cambon, who, on 4 May 1912, suggested to Nicolson that they should be resumed, and that Britain might join France and Russia in a naval convention. He said that his government desired that the British should look after the Channel and France's northern coasts, while the French should take care of the Mediterranean.⁶² Both Grey and Churchill were insistent that any such talks should await the completion of the government's consideration of the Admiralty's proposals, but Nicolson was surprised and irritated by Cambon's reference to conversations about the extent and nature of which he had not been informed.⁶³ Indeed, he and his colleagues might well have been

60. A move during 1910 and 1911 towards concentrating the French naval forces in northern waters proved to be only a temporary expedient. Williamson, pp.232-234, P.G.Halpern, The Mediterranean Naval Situation, 1908-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.1971). pp.47-85.

61. De Selves to P.Cambon, 14 Aug.1911, D.D.F.2, xiv, no.171.

De Saint-Seine to Delcassé, 11 Dec.1911, D.D.F.3, i, no.336.

Williamson, pp.227-228 and 245-248. Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson was first sea lord from January 1910 until September 1911.

62. Nicolson to Grey, 4 May 1912. B.D., x, pt.2, no.383.

63. Minute by Churchill on Nicolson to Grey, 4 May 1912, ibid. Nicolson to Bertie, 6 May 1912; Grey to Churchill, 11 May 1912, and minute by Churchill, 19 May 1912; B.D., x, pt.2, nos.384 and 389 (with Editorial Note). Asquith to Gerge V, 17 May 1912, Asquith MSS., vol.6.

excused for assuming that the projected naval moves were not unconnected with such talks.

Bertie was aware that conversations had taken place between British and French naval experts, but he seems only to have had a very general idea of what had been arranged.⁶⁴ Five years before there had been talk in French naval circles about the existence of an accord with the British Admiralty. The British vice-consul at Brest had informed Grey in March 1907 that the authorities there defended the concentration of the French fleet in the Mediterranean on the grounds that it had resulted from an understanding with Britain.⁶⁵ Yet in November 1908 Bertie learned from Grey that Cambon had just broached him on the possibility of beginning informal naval conversations.⁶⁶ Moreover, although in February 1910 Pichon told Bertie that as a result of such talks the French navy had been assigned a duty, Captain Howard Kelly, the British naval attache at Paris, was not aware of any joint planning having taken place until the autumn of 1911. Only then, after a conversation with Delcassé, during which the French minister referred to the existence of a naval understanding, did Kelly enquire of the Admiralty as to what had been done. He was subsequently told of what had been arranged, but there is no record of whether or not he passed this information on to Bertie.⁶⁷

64. Bertie was also aware of a tendency in France to depend upon England for naval protection. In February 1909 Pichon told him that if there were to be a European war 'it was not conceivable that England would not be on the same side as France in the present political conditions and the British Fleet would hold the seas against the German Fleet, and all that would be required for France would be a coast defence system'. Bertie to Grey, 18 Feb. 1909, Grey MSS., F.O.800/51.

65. Memorandum enclosed in Spencer S. Dickson to Grey, 5 May 1907, F.O.371/250, despt.no.8.

66. Grey to Bertie, 26 Nov. 1908, B.D., vi, no.106.

67. Bertie to Grey, 10 Feb. and 17 Feb. 1910, B.D., vi, nos.331 and 333. Journal as Naval Attaché, pp.23-25, Kelly MSS., KEL/3. Captain William Howard Kelly was British naval attaché at Paris from 1911.

The prospect of naval co-operation between Britain and France assumed a new significance for Bertie and his colleagues in London as the result of the Admiralty's proposals for the redeployment of the British fleet. Eyre Crowe contended that the British 'withdrawal' from the Mediterranean would lead to a diminution of Britain's influence there, and alter the whole power structure of the area to Britain's detriment. Most of these disadvantages, he argued, might be avoided if French co-operation were assured, and their fleet were in a position to beat those of Italy, Austria, and Turkey combined.⁶⁸ Yet, neither Nicolson nor Bertie believed that France's help could be secured without Britain undertaking some fresh obligation towards her. Discounting the possibility of an increase in the naval budget, or an alliance with Germany, Nicolson recommended that the only other alternative was an understanding with France, which would have 'very much the character of a defensive alliance'. While he doubted if the cabinet would approve this, he thought that it offered the 'cheapest, simplest, and safest solution'. An ardent exponent of maintaining a 'free hand' where relations with Germany were concerned, Nicolson protested to Bertie 'we can hardly continue sitting on the fence very much longer and continue to give evasive and uncertain answers'.⁶⁹

Bertie was more cautious than Nicolson. He admitted that the French could hardly be expected not to make some use of

68. Memorandum on the effect of a British Evacuation of the Mediterranean on Questions of Foreign Policy, 8 May 1912, B.D., x, pt.2, no.386.

69. Nicolson to Bertie, 6 May 1912; Nicolson to Grey, 6 May 1912, B.D., x, pt.2, nos.384 and 385. Nicolson would have preferred to have seen the entente developed into an alliance. But he admitted that in the present circumstances the British public would not accept that, and he thought that Germany might be so alarmed as to precipitate a war. Nicolson to Goschen, 7 May 1912; Nicolson to O'Beirne, 31 May 1912, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/355.

Britain's 'desertion' of the Mediterranean 'as a lever to extract something tangible from us', but he did not believe that the government would have to go as far as an alliance in order to secure their assistance. In a private letter to Nicolson of 9 May he suggested that the French might be satisfied with an exchange of notes between the two governments which would define generally their respective and joint interests, and state that in the event of these being endangered they would consult together. The French, Bertie assumed, would be prepared to accept that the question of an alliance should be settled when hostilities seemed near. They desired, he thought, to have arranged exactly what military assistance Britain could give them, and what mutual support there should be. He concluded that Britain ~~would have to~~ arrange something like this 'unless we prefer to run the risk of being stranded in splendid isolation'.⁷⁰

Neither the Admiralty's proposals, nor the idea of a closer relationship with France were generally regarded in London as offering good solutions to Britain's difficulties. In part this was because the former project was felt to be dependent upon the latter. The radicals within the cabinet opposed the naval changes, which they believed would lead to a tighter association with France, and Grey would have preferred to have increased spending on the navy rather than break with his colleagues. Churchill's advisers also favoured this alternative to an alliance with a 'country of unstable politics with no particular sympathy towards British interests except in so far as they represent French interests as well'. Moreover while the conservative press were prepared to subscribe to the idea of an alliance with France, both it and the Liberal newspapers were critical of the idea of relying on a

70. Bertie to Nicolson, 9 May 1912, B.D., x, pt.2 no.358.

a foreign power to defend British interests.⁷¹

Even within the Paris embassy opinions differed over what was the wisest course for the British government to pursue. Kelly advised Bertie that if Britain were intending to leave the care of the Mediterranean to the French, there had better be an alliance.⁷² But George Grahame took a very different view of the situation. On 27 May he wrote to Tyrrell deprecating the microbe-like development in the French press of the idea of an Anglo-French alliance. There was no reason, he thought, for offering the French anything for the time being for they liked being 'cocks of the walk'. In peacetime, he argued, it was bad for prestige to allow another power to guard British possessions, and in war-time it did not really matter what happened in the Mediterranean as victory or defeat would be decided in the main theatre of operations. No-one really supposed Austria and Italy could hold on to Malta and Cyprus after the defeat of the German navy. If France were allowed to look after the Mediterranean, then Grahame believed it would be sufficient payment 'for her to know that her northern coasts had been made additionally secure from attack by our naval concentration in the North Sea'. He did not consider that England and France would make *un bon ménage*, for, he observed, it might be "*un mariage d'amour*" but such marriages usually go wrong here'.⁷³

Some modifications were made in the Admiralty's plans as the result of consultations which took place on Malta at the end of May between Asquith, Churchill, and Kitchener. The latter's

71. A.J.Marder, From Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: the Royal Navy in the Fisher era, i, 288-291./ Williamson, pp.270-280. (5 vols., Oxford, 1961-1970) /

72. A Naval view of a Franco-British Alliance', memorandum by Kelly, 3 July 1912, Lumby, pp.58-60.

73. Grahame further observed to Tyrrell: 'We indeed live in strange times when ideas start and develop with a microbe-like activity. One never knows how far the contagion will spread. This talk about an Anglo-French alliance all of a sudden is a case in point. The French press had caught the microbe and is full of it'. Grahame to Tyrrell, 27 May, 1912, Grey MSS., F.O.800/53.

preoccupation with the defence of Egypt led Churchill eventually to agree to maintain a force of two or three battle cruisers, and a cruiser squadron at Malta, and to seek an agreement with France.⁷⁴ In a memorandum of 15 June, in which he defended the new dispositions, Churchill argued that an Anglo-French combination in a war would be able to keep full control of the Mediterranean and afford all necessary protection to British and French interests there.⁷⁵ Yet McKenna, who was the most adept of Churchill's critics, was incorrect in his assertion that an alliance with France was an 'essential feature' of the new strategy.⁷⁶ Although the naval war staff subsequently claimed that a reliable and effective arrangement with France was essential, Churchill clearly stated in his memorandum of the 15th that the Admiralty's measures stood by themselves. What he desired was not an alliance, but a 'defensive naval arrangement which would come into force only if the two Powers were at any time allies in a war'.⁷⁷

Despite his insistence upon the sufficiency and autonomous nature of the Admiralty's provisions, Churchill still failed to overcome the opposition of his colleagues in the cabinet. After a lengthy meeting of the defence committee on 4 July he was compelled to abandon the scheme, and accept their resolution that subject to the provision of a 'reasonable margin of superior

74. Kitchener to Grey, 19 May and 2 June 1912 with enclosures. Lumby, pp.19-20 and 22-23. Field Marshall Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum was British agent and consul-general at Cairo from 1911 until 1914.

75. Note by Churchill, 15 June 1912 and enclosures, Lumby, pp.24-31.

76. Memorandum by McKenna, 24 June 1912, Lumby pp.37-42. For Churchill's answer to this memorandum see: Memorandum by Churchill, 25 June 1912, Lumby, pp.44-50.

77. Memorandum by Churchill, 15 June 1911; Admiralty War Staff Memorandum on the Mediterranean Situation, 21 June 1911; Lumby, pp.25-31 and 32-35. At a meeting of the defence committee on 4 July Churchill insisted 'that the Admiralty had never assumed an alliance with France. Their view was (1) that we must maintain a continuous and certain superiority of force over the Germans in the North Sea, and (2) that all other objects, however precious, must, if necessary, be sacrificed to secure this end'. Committee of Imperial Defence: Minutes of the 117th Meeting, 4 July 1912, Lumby, pp.60-83.

strength' in home waters, the Admiralty

...ought to maintain available for Mediterranean purposes and based on a Mediterranean port a battle fleet equal to a one-Power Mediterranean standard, excluding France.⁷⁸

This declaration did not mean the abandonment of the idea of a naval arrangement with France. Implicit in it was the assumption that Britain would only find herself opposed by both Austria and Italy in the event of a war in which France would also be involved. Moreover, Churchill's defeat was more apparent than real. Given Britain's existing naval strength, it would not be possible for her to secure battleship parity with Austria before 1915, and the achievement of this would depend on the cabinet's readiness to sanction the necessary expenditure.⁷⁹

Such information as the quai d'Orsay was able to obtain about the Admiralty's future plans, and the public discussion of a possible alliance with France encouraged the French to think in terms of a tighter relationship with Britain.⁸⁰ Moreover, in July Delcassé gave his final approval to the plans of his war staff for the movement of the remaining French battle squadron at Brest to Toulon. This de Saint-Seine, the French naval attaché at London, told Admiral Bridgeman on 10 July would make France stronger in the Mediterranean than a combination of the Austrian and Italian fleets.⁸¹

The resumption of talks between the French naval attaché and the Admiralty, and the possibility that plans might be arranged for co-operation in the Mediterranean, raised the whole question^{of} Britain's liberty of action. On 16 July the cabinet resolved that it should be made plain to the French that conversations between military and naval experts would not prejudice

⁷⁸. Ibid.

⁷⁹. Memorandum by Churchill, 6 July 1912, Lumby, pp.83-85. Williamson, pp.280-282.

⁸⁰. De Fleuriau to Poincaré, 30 May 1912; Geoffray to Poincaré, 14 June 1912; D.D.F.3, iii, nos.56 and 102.

⁸¹. De Saint-Seine to Delcassé, 10 July 1912, D.D.F.3, iii, no.189. Captain the Comte Christian-Marie le G. de Saint-Seine was French naval attaché in London from 1912. Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman succeeded Arthur Wilson as first sea lord in 1911.

the 'freedom of decision of either Government as to whether they should or should not co-operate in the event of a war'.⁸² The danger was, however, that the French might claim that since their naval dispositions were dependent upon an arrangement with Britain, she was morally obliged to defend their northern coasts against attack. To avoid such a commitment Churchill endeavoured to have it explicitly stated in any arrangement arrived at by the British and French naval authorities that the deployment of their respective fleets was independent of any conversations between them. Thus while he recommended to de Saint-Seine that France should keep in the Mediterranean a fleet equal to that of Austria and Italy combined, he also insisted that the new dispositions which the Admiralty proposed were made in 'our own interests, and adequate in our opinion to the full protection of British trade and possessions in the Medit(erranea)n'.⁸³

Bertie, who met Grey on 17 July, had doubts about whether the cabinet's decision would be readily accepted by the French. It would, he suggested, be sufficient to say that it was understood that points arranged between the experts were not to be binding on the two governments 'unless they had agreed to give each other mutual armed support'. This form, he believed, would be 'more palatable to the French than the tautology of the Cabinet draft declaration'. Evidently under the misapprehension that the government were proposing to leave the defence of Britain's Mediterranean interests to France, he warned Grey that the French would require some quid pro quo. Returning to the suggestion that he had previously made to Nicolson, he put it to Grey that the quid pro quo might be in the form of an exchange of notes defining the major interests of England and France, and stating

82. Asquith to George V, 16 July 1912, Asquith MSS. vol 6

83. Memorandum by Churchill, 17 July 1912, B.D., x, pt.2, no.399.

that in the event of any of those interests being in the opinion of either power endangered, they would confer together on what steps, if any, should be taken to safeguard them.

Grey showed no enthusiasm for Bertie's suggestion, which he considered to be going much further than anything hitherto done, and something like an alliance. To this Bertie demurred. He thought that the French required something to give them confidence in Britain, and he insisted that there need be no fear of the French 'creating a war with Germany', although they might find themselves in a position 'whence the only outcome could be war'. If Britain could not acquiesce in the defeat of France, then, Bertie urged Grey, provision would have to be made now for defending her existence, and an exchange of notes 'would be the means of communication whenever there was a danger to the interests of the two countries'. Armed support, if it were to be effective, he professed, would have to be given at the outset of a conflict.

The cabinet, as Grey anticipated, rejected Bertie's formula in favour of the proposal by Churchill which they had already sanctioned.⁸⁴ On 23 July de Saint-Seine received from the Admiralty a draft agreement which outlined a plan for co-operation between the French and British navies in the Mediterranean and the straits of Dover. The details of this project were preceded by a declaration to the effect that the agreement would relate solely to the case where Britain and France were allies in a war, and that it would not affect the political freedom of either power with regard to embarking on such a conflict. It also stated:

It is understood that France has disposed almost the whole of her battle fleet in the Mediterranean leaving her Atlantic seaboard in the care of Flotillas.

Great Britain on the other hand has concentrated her battle fleets in home waters, leaving in the Medit(erranea)n a strong

84. Memorandum by Bertie, 25 July, 1912, Bertie MSS., A.F.O.800/166.

containing force of battle and armoured cruisers and torpedo craft. These dispositions have been made independently because they are the best which the separate interests of each country suggests, having regard to all circumstances and probabilities and they do not arise from any naval agreement of convention.⁸⁵

On the same day as this declaration was delivered to the French embassy Grey gave Bertie his personal assurance that he would not remain in the cabinet if there were any question of abandoning the entente. Indeed, he told Bertie that he might put this to Poincaré in defending the British government's proposal. To Bertie's protest that the cabinet could not afford to lose him, and that it would be the dissenting ministers who would have to resign, Grey replied that he would not risk breaking up the government and that he would go. It was unlikely however, that the French government could have been satisfied with a personal commitment from a foreign secretary who would resign rather than split the cabinet on the issue of Britain's loyalty to France. Bertie warned him that the French would not long be content to protect, or join in defending British interests in the Mediterranean if they had nothing more promising than a statement that the arrangements between experts were entirely without prejudice.⁸⁶

As Bertie had predicted, the French were anything but satisfied with Churchill's proposition. Paul Cambon assumed that the achievement of the dispositions to which Churchill referred was the object rather than the basis of the proposed accord. On 24 July he protested to Nicolson that the project entailed a deployment of the French navy in such a way as would leave France's northern coasts unprotected, while 'England was free to aid France or not as she liked, and be under no obligation to do so'. It was possible, Cambon concluded, that the French naval authorities would require first to have assurances

85. Grey to Carnegie, 22 July 1912, B.D.x, pt.2, no.400. Editorial Note, B.D., x, pt.2, 602.

86. Memorandum by Bertie, 25 July, 1912, op.cit.

that British naval aid would be forthcoming for the Channel and Atlantic ports of France. Churchill's explanation to the French naval attache that these dispositions were to be arrived at quite independently by each navy was rejected by Cambon. France, he insisted to Grey, had concentrated her fleet in the Mediterranean as the result of naval conversations begun with Fisher in 1907.⁸⁷

Cambon's claim, which had no factual basis, appears to have perplexed Churchill. Nevertheless, while he admitted that he had not been aware of the extent to which the Admiralty had been committed by his predecessor, he still considered the non-committal proviso to be 'desirable and perfectly fair'. The present dispositions, he observed, 'represented the best arrangements either power would make independently', and it was not true that the French were occupying the Mediterranean to oblige Britain.⁸⁸

On the advice of Nicolson, who thought that as a consequence of Cambon's protestations, Grey would issue him with supplementary instructions, Bertie decided to extend his stay in London.⁸⁹ There he had discussions with both the king and Cambon. Upon the former, who deprecated any question of an alliance with France, he impressed his idea for an exchange of notes.⁹⁰ But by 26 July even Nicolson and Tyrrell had accepted Churchill's argument. They told Bertie that the planned movement of the greater and most powerful portion of the French fleet to the

87. Minute by Nicolson, 24 July 1912, B.D., x pt.2, no.401. Paul Cambon's knowledge of the origins of the Anglo-French naval discussions was somewhat vague. In the summer of 1911 he had been under the impression that pourparlers had commenced when Clemenceau was premier and that an unwritten accord had been arranged. But de Selves had then informed him that the ministry of marine did not know of the results of such conversations. P.Cambon to de Selves, 14 Aug.1901 and annotation by Bapst; de Selves to P.Cambon, 15 Aug.1911; D.D.F.2, xiv, nos.175 and 176.

88. Note by Churchill, 29 July 1912, B.D., x, pt.2, no.403. In a recent study of the naval situation in the Mediterranean it has been effectively argued that the concentration of the French fleet in the Mediterranean was not immediately related to the British withdrawal. Halperin, p.85.

89. Memorandum by Bertie, 25 July 1912, op.cit.

90. Memorandum by Bertie, 25 July 1912, Bertie MSS., B.F.O.800/187

Mediterranean was 'the unprompted decision of the French Government'. 'There was therefore', Bertie noted, 'no question of a quid pro quo being due to France in the shape of a protection for her Atlantic and Channel coasts by the British fleet in return for the protection or defence of British interests in the Mediterranean by the French fleet'. On the 28th Bertie returned to Paris with no further instructions.⁹¹

In the meantime Cambon suggested to Grey an arrangement which was not dissimilar to that which Bertie had previously proposed. He put it to Grey on 26 July that if Churchill's proviso were to remain at the head of the projected naval agreement, the British and French governments should exchange notes promising that if peace were menaced they would at least communicate and converse with each other. Grey, however, found 'great objections' to a secret exchange of notes, and for parliamentary reasons rejected this suggestion. Moreover, he could see little utility in such an accord for, as he assured Cambon, the two governments would of course consult with each other in a crisis.⁹²

Bertie similarly discouraged French aspirations. Following Grey's advice, he, on 30 July, recommended Poincaré not to press his views with respect to discussions between experts for the moment, as the majority of the cabinet would not be prepared to accept the declaration which he desired. He assured Poincaré that so long as Grey remained in office he might be sure that there would be no abandonment of the 'spirit of the Entente'. This, however, was insufficient to satisfy the French premier. He readily abandoned Cambon's plea that the British and French dispositions were inter-dependent, and frankly admitted that the

91. Bertie learned from Tyrrell and Nicolson that Cambon had misunderstood the French naval attaché's report of his interviews with Churchill. Memorandum by Bertie, 27 July 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

92. Grey to Carnegie, 26 July 1912, B.D., x, pt.2, no.402.

decision of the French government with regard to the fleet was 'quite spontaneous. Nevertheless, he asserted, that the decision to concentrate the French fleet in the Mediterranean 'would not have been taken if they could suppose that in the event of Germany making a descent on the Channel or Atlantic ports of France, England would not come to the assistance of France'. The object of the entente, he contended, was for the 'maintenance of each other and their defence against attack-unprovoked attack-and the balance of power'. If the entente did not mean that England would come to France's aid in the event of a German attack on her ports, then Poincaré observed 'its value to France is not great'.

Poincaré's chief objection to Churchill's draft arrangement was ostensibly that a political resolution should not form part of an agreement strictly between naval experts. While both governments must reserve to themselves the decision as to putting into force such arrangements, their reservations, he told Bertie, should be recorded in some other form of document. Technically, as Bertie pointed out, and Asquith agreed, Poincaré was correct. But Poincaré's main object seems to have been to bring the British government to redefine their position vis-à-vis France, and to avoid any explicit declaration such as would deny any connexion between the naval movements and the entente. Like Bertie and Cambon, both of whom he had time to consult, Poincaré wanted some form of declaration which would entail conversations taking place between the British and French governments the moment that there appeared to be a danger to their interests so that they might decide at once whether the arrangements between experts should be put into force.⁹³

93. Bertie to Grey, 30 July 1912, B.D., x, pt.2, nos.404 and 405. Bertie to Tyrrell, 31 July 1912, Grey MSS., F.O.800/53.

All this was some way from the original decision to bring the British and French naval plans up to date, and in Churchill's view things had 'got off the rails'. Under the impression that the cause of all the difficulties was his proviso, he suggested that it might be redrafted in more general terms so as to read 'Both Powers will make such dispositions of their naval strength as shall best conduce to their national interests'. Thus without referring to specific dispositions, any link between the British and French naval dispositions would be avoided.⁹⁴ As, however, Bertie pointed out in a letter to Grey of 13 August this would make no difference to Poincaré's objection to the inclusion of a non-committal declaration in an agreement between experts.

Bertie thought that the French might find acceptable a naval agreement which stated that the British and French naval authorities would exchange full information as to the actual and prospective disposition of their naval strength 'which they make as best conducing to the preservation of their national interests'. The document would then proceed to deal with the best way in which the forces thus disposed could be utilized in a war in ^{which} both countries were allies. In a separate form, Bertie thought, it could be laid down that it was well understood that the naval arrangement would only come into force if and when both governments were agreed that they should act together navally in certain circumstances. He reminded Grey that Poincaré was not the only French foreign minister to be dissatisfied with the existing conditions, and again he explained that what the French government would like best would be an exchange of notes defining their joint interests, and containing promises to confer together

94. Churchill to Grey, 2 Aug. 1912, B.D., x, pt. 2, no. 406. Bertie was sent a copy of Churchill's letter. Grey to Bertie, 7 Aug. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/166.

in the event of their being menaced. If they were then agreed that combined action should be taken, the military and naval arrangements between the two powers should be put into force. Were such an exchange impossible, then Bertie considered that the French might be satisfied by an exchange of declarations to the effect that notwithstanding any arrangements signed by experts, the two governments remained entirely free to determine, whenever circumstances arose, whether they should give each other armed support.

Bertie also warned Grey that while the French accepted that the naval moves were autonomous, they nevertheless contended that they would not have taken place if each power had not been confident that in the area from which it was withdrawing it could count upon the assistance of the other.⁹⁵ In fact it seemed as if Poincaré was attributing to the entente a meaning which implicitly involved a British moral commitment to defend France and her interests. Fully aware of the dangers of accepting these views and Bertie's interpretation of them, Churchill warned Asquith on 23 August

Everyone must feel who knows the facts that we have all the obligations of an alliance without its advantages and above all without its precise definitions.

He refuted Poincaré's claims, and insisted that if Britain had not existed the French could not have made better dispositions. Nevertheless, he was quite prepared to abandon his draft declaration. He informed the prime minister that he was not particular as to how his views should be given effect to, and he made 'no avail' as to the document in which they were set forth.⁹⁶ This, Asquith agreed, was a matter of form on which they might give way

95. Bertie to Grey, 13 Aug. 1912, B.D., x, pt. 2, no. 409.

96. W.S. Churchill, The World Crisis, 1911-1918 (6 vols., London 1923-1931), i, 112-113. R.S. Churchill, ii, companion vol. pt. 3, 1638-1639.

'if Bertie could suggest some manner of affording this agreement of not too formal a character'.⁹⁷

Before any new formula was found with which to replace Churchill's declaration, Cambon returned to the subject of a consultative agreement. Evidently he still hoped to use the re-deployment of the French navy as a bargaining counter in negotiations with Grey for on 19 September he warned him that the concentration of the French fleet in the Mediterranean would not be definitive until France knew where she stood with England. The two governments, he proposed, should agree that in the event of either of them apprehending aggression, they should discuss the situation and '*rechercheraient les moyens d'assurer de concert le maintien de la paix et d'écarter toute tentative d'agression*'. As Grey recognised, this statement simply expressed what would happen under the existing circumstances.⁹⁸ Indeed Asquith described it as '*almost a platitude*'.⁹⁹ For Cambon, however, the important point was to have something of this nature in writing.

Grey seems to have had no personal objection to offering Cambon the assurances which he requested, but he had doubts about the form in which it should be given. The publication of an exchange of notes would, he feared, have a '*very exciting effect in Europe*', and he and Asquith were at first reluctant to accept any arrangement that could not be communicated to parliament. Cambon, however, persisted in pressing for some written engagement, and in agreement with the prime minister, Grey finally consented to an exchange of letters with the ambassador on the condition that this was sanctioned by the cabinet.¹⁰⁰

97. Mallet to Grey, 23 Aug.1912, Grey MSS., F.O.800/94.

98. Grey to Bertie, 19 Sept. and 27 Sept.1912, B.D., x,pt.2. nos.410 and 411.

99. Asquith to Grey, 11 Oct.1912, B.D., x, pt.2.no.412.

100. Grey to Bertie, 16 Oct.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

As Bertie's earlier suggestion for an exchange of notes had already been rejected by the cabinet, their approval of Cambon's proposal might have seemed unlikely. Such an arrangement did, however, provide an opportunity for them to obtain both an explicit statement on the non-committal nature of the naval and military conversations, and a substitute for Churchill's projected preamble. Thus on 30 October Grey was able, with the consent of his colleagues, to propose to Cambon that three points be recognized in an exchange of letters: that conversations between experts had taken place; that these did not bind their governments to action; and that in the event of a threatening situation arising the two governments would consult with one another. These were to form the basis of notes exchanged on 22 and 23 November by Grey and Paul Cambon.¹⁰¹

The only explicit reference in these documents to the dispositions recently assumed by the British and French fleets was the assertion by Grey that they were not 'based upon an engagement to co-operate in war'. But in January and February 1913 three agreements were concluded between the British and French naval authorities which provided for co-operation in the straits of Dover, the English Channel, and the Mediterranean. Each of these arrangements contained the provision that they were only to become effective in the event of the two powers being allies in a war with Germany or the triple alliance.¹⁰²

In itself the exchange of notes between Grey and Cambon did little to extend the existing relationship between Britain and France. It simply committed to paper in a precise form

101. Asquith to George V, 1 Oct. 1912, Asquith MSS., 6. Grey to Bertie 30 Oct. 1912; Grey to Cambon 22 Nov. 1912; Cambon to Grey, 23 Nov. 1912, B.D., x, pt. 2. nos. 413, 416 and 417.

102. The Anglo-French naval accords and the ensuing co-operation between the English and French navies are discussed in detail in Halperin, pp. 105-149.

the nature of the entente as it related to a possible European conflict, and the terms upon which Britain and France would continue to co-operate with each other. But Poincaré could also feel satisfied at the British cabinet having formally endorsed this new arrangement. Moreover, unlike the declaration which Churchill had proposed in August neither the notes nor the non-committal provisions of the agreements on future naval co-operation, affirmed the autonomous nature of the dispositions assumed by the British and French navies. They merely stated that they were not the result of an alliance. Indeed in so far as the arrangements worked out in February 1913 were dependant for their application upon the maintenance of the new dispositions, it might be contended that Britain had thereby incurred a moral obligation to defend the northern coasts of France in the event of a continental war. Certainly nothing was contained in the notes which could be held to refute the claims made by Paul Cambon on 1 August 1914 that at Britain's request, France had moved her fleet to the Mediterranean.¹⁰³ By then, however, circumstances had changed. Faced by a cabinet which was as yet undecided as to the course which it would pursue in the event of a Franco-German war, Cambon's appeal seemed to Nicolson like a 'happy inspiration'.¹⁰⁴ Even Churchill, who had disclaimed any such obligation during 1912, was prepared to endorse Grey's contention that Britain must defend the northern shores of France.¹⁰⁵

Bertie was less concerned with the ethics of the entente than with ensuring that in the event of a new international crisis,

103. H.Nicolson, Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart., First Lord Carnock. A Study in Old Diplomacy (London, 1930), p.420. P.Cambon to Viviani, 1 Aug.1914, D.D.F.3, xi, no.352, Grey to Bertie, 1 Aug.1914, B.D., xi, nos.426 and 447.

104. Nicolson to Hardinge, 5 Sept.1914, Hardinge MSS., 93.

105. W.S.Churchill, pp.201-202.

Britain would be in a position to offer immediate and effective assistance to France. For this reason he had opposed Grey's efforts to settle with the German government on a non-aggression formula, and had backed the idea of a consultative pact with France. Nevertheless, the notes exchanged in November 1912 were neither as comprehensive nor as precise as he would have favoured. When in June 1913 it seemed possible that the French might once more seek to achieve some more binding arrangement with England, Bertie raised with Grey the need for an exchange of notes of 'a less vague character than the private letter to M.Cambon'.¹⁰⁶ Indeed the notes exchanged were essentially the product of a compromise between the desire of Churchill and his colleagues to make clear the non-committal nature of the military and naval conversations, and the endeavours of Poincaré and Cambon to secure some more formal definition of the entente. Bertie did not abandon his proposal for an accord which would register the joint interests of Britain and France. But before the outbreak of war in August 1914 he was to witness no further progress towards its achievement.

106. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

Chapter X.

The last years of peace.

In the introduction to his annual report for 1912 Bertie observed:

With French people the entente between France and England has become the national policy and the means for the preservation of peace, viz., as the obstacle which stands in the way of a German attack on France.¹

Yet by 1 August 1913, the date on which Bertie completed his report, peace between the great powers seemed less likely to be menaced by a Franco-German quarrel than by the problems of the Near East. Moreover, it was by then apparent that a war which involved France and Germany could well break out in circumstances in which it would be very difficult for Grey to justify Britain's participation to his cabinet colleagues and parliament.

The negotiations which had preceded the exchange of notes between Grey and Paul Cambon in November 1912 had been conducted against the backcloth of the Tripoli war, and a period of increasing tension between Turkey and her Balkan neighbours.² With some encouragement from Russia first Serbia, and then Greece and Montenegro had allied themselves with Bulgaria, and during the summer of 1912 Macedonia had seemed ever more likely to become the subject of a conflict. Finally in October, in spite of the efforts of the great powers to maintain peace and to further reform in the Ottoman dominions, first Montenegro and then her allies launched themselves into a war with the Turks.³

1. Annual Report for France, 1912, Bertie to Grey, 1 Aug. 1913, F.O. 371/1646, despt. no. 407.

2. W.C. Askew, Europe and Italy's acquisition of Libya (Durham, N.C., 1942)

3. E. Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912, (Pennsylvania, 1965). Ernst C. Helmreich, The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, (London, 1938), pp. 3-145.

During the ensuing conflict Grey endeavoured to promote co-operation between the great powers with a view to helping to decide the future political shape of the Near East. His task was facilitated by the acceptance by the other powers of an Anglo-German suggestion for an ambassadors' conference, which in mid-December met in London with the object of recommending solutions to the various problems which arose.⁴ Nevertheless, neither the British nor the French government could ignore the possibility that Russia might be drawn by her defence of the aspirations of her Balkan friends into a war with Austria and Germany.

Bertie played no very conspicuous part in the diplomatic exchanges between the great powers to which events in the Near East gave rise. But Russia's diplomacy in the Balkans tended to confirm many of the misgivings which he had previously expressed about Russian conduct. Their championship of the Slav cause seemed in his opinion to result in unnecessary friction in Europe, and to menace the interests of Britain and France in Turkey and the rest of the muslim world. At the same time he felt that the French were being 'dragged' about by their ally in the support of what were 'often merely sentimental or unavowable Russian interests'.⁵ These views were reinforced in Bertie's mind by his intense dislike of the manners and activities of the

4. Ibid., pp.221-224.

5. Annual Report for France, 1912, opcit. Even Nicolson believed that the 'primary cause of all this trouble' was Sazonow's instigating the Balkan states to make alliances and 'parcel out Macedonia'. Nicolson to Bertie, 11 Oct.1912, Bertie MSS., A, P.O.800/166. Bertie was personally quite sympathetic towards Austria. He certainly drew a distinction between Austria, a limitrophe state of the Balkan peninsula, and Russia. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1912; 7 Nov.1912; 26 Nov.1912; B.D., ix, pt.2, nos.123, 156 and 280.

Russian ambassador at Paris.⁶ The latter, whose honesty he questioned, he suspected of bribing the French press with the aid of funds supplied by the pan-Slavic unions of Moscow and St. Petersburg.⁷ Indeed, he gave Izvolsky's presence in Paris as one reason for preferring London as the venue for Grey's proposed ambassadorial conference.⁸

Yet, critical though he was of Russian diplomacy, Bertie doubted if Russia would be prepared to risk a war with her neighbours over issues such as the fate of Albania, and Serbia's access to the sea. Instead he thought that Britain and France might simply have to witness a re-enactment of the Bosnian crisis. If Sazonov were faced with the prospect of a war with Austria, backed by Germany, in which Roumania and Italy would act against Russia's Balkan protégés, then, Bertie suggested to Nicolson,

6. Bertie suspected that Izvolsky favoured the idea of a new Dreikaiserbund, or at any rate, closer co-operation between Russia and Austria in the Balkans. Bertie to Grey, 3 Jan. 1911, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/173. Memorandum by Bertie, 19 Feb. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Bertie to Nicolson, 15 May 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Nicolson, 12 Oct. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Bertie to Grey, 23 Feb. 1913, Grey MSS., F.O.800/54. Szécsen to M.A., 13 April 1912, Ö-U, iv, no. 3435. Of Izvolsky Bertie observed to Maurice Paléologue 'quel odieux animal! C'est miracle qu'il n'ait pas encore mis le feu à l'Europe', G.M. Paléologue, Au Quai d'Orsay à la veille de la tourmente; Journal 1913-1914, (Paris, 1947) pp. 122-123.

7. Bertie to Grey, 3 Oct. 1912; Bertie to Nicolson, 16 Nov. 1912; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Memorandum by Bertie, 27 June 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Szécsen to M.A., 12 April 1912 and 13 June 1913, Ö-U, vi, nos. 6584 and 7361. But Bertie also admitted that it was 'a recognized practice' for diplomats at Paris to maintain relations with the press. He excepted himself from this rule. Bertie to Grey, 3 April, 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/54.

8. Szécsen to MA, 10 Dec. 1912, Ö-U, v, no. 4854. The membership of the diplomatic body at Paris, which by 1912 included three former foreign ministers, seems to have been a deterrent to the idea of holding an ambassadorial conference there. Grey thought the presence of Izvolsky and Tittoni, the former Italian foreign minister, at Paris might create difficulties for a conference. Kiderlen-Wächter told the Austrian ambassador at Berlin 'aber speziell was die Einberufung einer Konferenz in Paris anlangt, sei es ihm klar geworden, dass das Paar Izvolsky-Bertie eine solche dort wohl von vornherein, unmöglich annehmbar erscheinen wesse'. Grey to Bertie, 6 Dec. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Szécsen to MA., 24 Nov. 1912, Ö-U, iv, no. 4595. But Schoen thought that Bertie did not want an ambassadorial conference in Paris because he had become too indolent to want the extra work load, and because he had taken little interest in the Balkans. Schoen to Bethmann Hollweg, 24 Nov. 1912, G.P., xxxiii, no. 12432.

Russia would submit.⁹ He spoke in similar terms to Delcassé, who in February 1913 was appointed to succeed Georges Louis at St. Petersburg.¹⁰ On 3 March he told the new ambassador, that in his estimation Russia would not fight, but that the real danger would be that she would call for diplomatic support in pressing claims that she would renounce at the last moment, leaving Britain and France in the same undesirable position as they had occupied in 1909. Nevertheless, he thought that neither the British nor the French public would countenance being drawn into a war to make good the claims of Russia to maintain her influence in the Balkans.

Bertie felt certain that one of the reasons for Delcassé's mission to St. Petersburg was to put 'pressure on the Emperor and the Russian ministers to moderate their Balkanic zeal'.¹¹ But Russian enthusiasm for the smaller Balkan states continued to embarrass London and Paris. When in March 1913 it seemed likely that the Austrians would intervene in order to prevent the Montenegrins from taking Scutari in defiance of the wishes of the ambassadorial conference, Grey proposed the despatch of an international naval force to Antivari.¹² Sazanov accepted

9. Bertie to Nicolson, 8 Nov. 1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161.

10. Bertie to Grey, 17 Feb. 1913 and 20 Feb. 1913, B.D., ix, pt.2, no.627 and 635.

11. Bertie to Grey, 6 March 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. The French government may have been less anxious to bring Russia to heel than Bertie imagined. Poincaré seems to have accepted the idea of a radical change in the Balkans sponsored by Russia. There is also evidence to support the view that his main object in appointing Delcassé was to help to co-ordinate French and Russian interests in the Balkans, and to form a tighter block between France, Russia and Britain against the Triple Alliance. René Girault, 'Les Balkans dans les relations franco-russes en 1912', Revue Historique, ccliii, (1975), 176-184.

12. Helmreich, pp.296-298. F.R. Bridge, Great Britain and Austria-Hungary, 1906-1914: a diplomatic history (London, 1972), pp.200-202. R.J. Crampton, 'The Decline of the Concert of Europe in the Balkans, 1913-1914', The Slavonic and East European Review, lii, (1974), 393-396. Grey to Cartwright, 28 March 1913; Grey to Buchanan, 31 March 1913; B.D., ix, pt.2. nos.766-767.

the proposal, but fearing popular opposition in Russia to the coercion of Montenegro, he declined to send a warship.¹³ Likewise, Pichon, who had recently returned to the Quai d'Orsay, and who was nervous about appearing to have separated France from her ally, would not commit a French vessel to the demonstrations without the explicit concurrence of Russia.¹⁴ Indeed, since Grey had no wish to act with Austria and Italy alone, his initiative seemed unlikely to succeed.¹⁵

Irritated by Pichon's reluctance to pursue a bolder course, Bertie complained bitterly to him about Russia's vacillation. On 1 April he put it to him that it would be injurious to the future authority of the ambassadors' conference, and inconsistent with their dignity and self-respect if they allowed the king of Montenegro to defy them because his 'Protectress', Russia, abstained from joining in enforcing a decision in which she had acquiesced. Russia's authority and influence, Bertie claimed, had practically disappeared in the Near East except where it coincided with what the Balkan states considered to be to their own advantage. He observed that Russia's representatives in the Balkans were generally without instructions, or received them too late to co-operate with the representatives of other powers in making communications which were disagreeable to the governments to

13. Grey to Bertie, 28 March 1913, B.D., ix, pt.2, no.762.

14. Pichon had again to reckon with the criticism of his diplomacy by Tardieu, who was opposed to the idea of France joining in the naval demonstration at Scutari. George Grahame wrote to Tyrrell on 2 April 1913, 'Pichon is weak-kneed and this sort of thing will frighten him. I don't believe he will act unless Sazonov explicitly authorizes him to do so in a manner which he can make public later to defend himself in the Chamber. I expect Barthou (the president of the council) is finking. He is pretty thick with Tardieu and one may be sure that the latter has been to see him and endeavoured to dissuade him from joining in the demonstration'. Grahame to Tyrrell, 2 April 1913, Grey MSS., F.O.800/54. Bertie later expressed his belief that Pichon was afraid of Izvolsky and dare not speak his mind to him. Bertie to Grey, 22 Aug.1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Bertie to Grey, 1 April 1913, B.D., ix, pt.2, nos.771 and 780.

15. Grey to Bertie, 1 April 1913, and 2 April 1913, R.D., ix, pt.2, nos.772, 782 and 789.

which they were accredited. 'Their attitude', he protested, 'was illogical and might in the case of the Montenegrin difficulty bring about the conflagration which it had been the endeavour of...the Ambassadors to obviate'.¹⁶ Only, however, after Grey had warned Paris and St. Petersburg that he would be unable to object to independent action by Austria and Italy, and that he might have to abandon the reunions, did Sazonov formally request French participation and Pichon oblige by sending a ship.¹⁷

During the summer of 1913 Bertie's attitude towards Russia did not change. When in conversation with Nicolson on 23 June the latter ventured to praise Russia's policy, and claimed that Austria had caused discord in the Balkans, Bertie retorted that the Russian emperor by posing as the 'Protector of all Slavs had given unnecessary offence to the Emperor of Austria, the sovereign of millions of Slavs'.¹⁸ Similarly he supported Grey in his opposition to the Russian backed claims of the Balkan allies for indemnities from the Porte, and on 13 June he pressed Pichon, whom he openly accused of being 'at times too Russian', to join with Britain in making urgent representations at St. Petersburg on this subject. It might, he argued, in the long run be to the advantage of Russia to weaken Turkey, but it would not benefit Britain and France if the Turks were left without the

16. Nicolson was not happy about the language used by Bertie in his conversation with Pichon. He minuted on Bertie's account of it: 'A curious outburst against Russia to Russia's ally'. Bertie to Grey, 2 April 1913, and minute by Nicolson, B.D., ix, pt.2, no. 794. But in a letter to Bertie of 3 April Grey observed: 'It will be deplorable if the French do not take part in the Naval demonstration. They and the Russians are both playing a very ignoble part that may end in the European war that they wish to avoid'. He turned down a French suggestion that Britain and Austria should jointly participate in a naval demonstration on the grounds that public opinion would oppose it. Grey to Bertie, 3 April 1913; Bertie to Grey, 3 April 1913, tel., Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Grey to Bertie, 3 April 1913, B.D., ix, pt.2, no.807.

17. Grey to Bertie, 2 April 1913; Grey to Cartwright, 4 April 1913. B.D., ix, pt.2, nos.795 and 805. Helmreich, pp.299-300. Grey subsequently confessed to Buchanan: 'We had a horrid twenty-four hours here, when it looked as if the French were going to back out of the naval demonstration and it was a great relief when they decided to join'. Grey to Buchanan, 7 April 1913, Grey MSS., F.O.800/74.

18. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161.

pecuniary means to re-organise their administration and armed forces.¹⁹ Having failed, however, to win French support for the British case, he took advantage of the visit of Poincaré and Pichon to London in June to urge Grey to speak strongly to them about indemnities. Worried lest the French government should be encouraged to believe that Britain would give way on this issue, he pressed Grey to make it quite clear to France and Russia that British policy was to maintain what remained of the Ottoman empire as a going concern with proper means to be independent of Russian 'tutelage'. The alternative Russian policy was, he maintained, 'to bleed Turkey financially sufficiently so as to prevent her reorganising herself...in order that she may in future be at the mercy of Russia'.²⁰

The prospect of a radical change in the strategic balance in the eastern Mediterranean clearly bothered Bertie. He pleaded with Grey to take a firm line over the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese islands, lest this should come to be regarded as fait accompli.²¹ Moreover, he continued to suspect that the Russians had designs upon Constantinople and the straits. He therefore vigorously opposed a suggestion made originally by Paul

19. Bertie to Grey, 29 May 1913; Grey to Bertie, 12 June 1913, B.D., ix, pt.2, nos.1016 and 1054. Bertie explained to Pichon 'that to me the difference between the intentions of the Russian Govt. and the French Govt. seemed to be that the first named Govt. desire to saigner la Turquie à blanc and the French Govt. not to bleed her so much but to make her quite helpless'. When Gaston Doumergue succeeded Pichon at the Quai d'Orsay Bertie advised Grey that he would be 'less pliant than was Pichon in regard to the desires of the Russian Government'. Bertie to Grey, 13 June 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Grey, 18 Dec.1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

20. Memorandum by Bertie, 29 June 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

21. Bertie also suspected that Poincaré had 'a hankering for an island in the Aegean Sea partly to redress changes in the Mediterranean due to the acquisition by Italy of Tripoli and partly to be there before the Germans'. Bertie to Grey, 4 Nov.1912, B.D., ix, pt.2, no.123. Memoranda by Bertie, 29 June 1913 and 23 July 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Memorandum by Bertie, 25 July 1912, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187. Bertie to Nicolson, 24 May 1912, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/356. Richard Bosworth, 'Britain and Italy's Acquisition of the Dodecanese, 1912-1915', The Historical Journal. xiii (1970), 683-703.

Cambon to Grey in June 1912 that Russia should have a 'position' in the Mediterranean.²² In his annual report for 1912 he pointed out to Grey that in a war in which Russia was on the side of France or England, she could make use of French and British ports. If, however, Russia were to possess a naval station of her own in the eastern Mediterranean, he thought that it would add to her 'power of injury to British interests if she were at war with us until we evicted her'. He contended

...from an enfeebled Turkey she would probably obtain a right of way through the Bosphorous and Dardanelles, and her ships of war would come out of the Black Sea into the Mediterranean, make raids on our commerce, using the Russian naval station as a refuge and slipping back into the Sea of Marmora, the gates of which at the Dardanelles would be closed against any pursuing British squadron.²³

The resumption of the Balkan struggle in July 1913 seemed in Bertie's estimation to offer a fresh opportunity to restrain Russian ambitions. He wrote to Grey with regard to the initial Greek Victories that the more territory which they could squeeze out of Bulgaria the better. 'Greece', he commented, 'will be more get-at-able than Bulgaria, and can be used as a block against a seizure of Constantinople by Bulgaria on her own account or on behalf of Russia later on'.²⁴ Similarly, he advised Grey against putting pressure on the Turks to withdraw from Adrianople. He refused to take talk of isolated Russian action against Turkey seriously, and Izvolsky's warning to Grahame on 23 July that Russia would act alone, he dismissed as bluff. Germany, he thought, was not yet prepared for a partition of Turkey, and both she and Austria would, he believed, oppose Russia taking separate action

22. Bertie to Grey, 8 Sept. 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/173. In the previous autumn Bertie had suggested to Poincaré that the fastest solution to the problem of the straits would be the establishment of a regime similar to that which governed the Suez Canal. Bertie to Grey, 6 Nov. 1912, B.D., ix, pt.2, no.143.

23. Annual Report for France, 1912, op.cit.

24. Bertie to Grey, 17 July 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/172.

in Asia Minor. Bertie had known Sazonov when he was Russian chargé d'affaires at the Vatican and later when he was counsellor at London, and he was not, he told Poincaré, a man capable of making decisions which would involve great risks to his country.²⁵

Bertie's less than friendly attitude towards Russia was shared by others amongst Grey's officials. Tyrrell, who responded readily to the idea of improved relations with Germany, complained to Chirol on 17 April of the 'cynical selfishness' of Russian policy in Asia. He reasoned that since Britain was relieved for a good time to come from the German menace, she could take a 'somewhat firmer line with Russia without compromising the Entente'.²⁶ But the disparaging comments of Bertie and Tyrrell upon Russian conduct contrasted sharply with the views expressed by Nicolson. Worried lest the Germans should in seeking Britain's co-operation in Balkan affairs, be attempting to win Britain away from her 'friends', he frowned upon Bertie's complaints to Pichon about Russian diplomacy, and urged Grey to support Russia and France

25. Bertie laid great stress upon the effect that any British pressure on Turkey would have upon muslim opinion in India. In conversation with Poincaré he also emphasized the need for France to take account of muslim opinion in north Africa. Memoranda by Bertie of 23 and 27 July 1913; Grahame to Bertie, 24 July 1913; Bertie to Grey, 25 July 1913; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Bertie to Grey, 8 Dec.1911, B.D., x, pt.1, 900.

26. Chirol was alarmed by Tyrrell's 'incline' towards Germany. He warned Hardinge: 'Everything that Petersburg or even Paris does or says is scrutinized with the greatest suspicion, and even malevolence. Whereas everything that Vienna or Berlin does or says is assumed to be perfectly straight forward and even generous'. Chirol to Hardinge, 10 April 1913, and 18 April 1913, Hardinge MSS. 93.

in the Near East.²⁷ So important did he regard the maintenance and strengthening of the understanding with Russia that he confessed to Buchanan, his successor at St. Petersburg, that he was prepared to risk being considered an 'infatuated Russophil'.²⁸ Indeed, after his conversation with him on 23 June, Bertie observed that in Nicolson's view 'Russia can do no wrong'.²⁹

Differences in their approach to Russia contributed during 1913 to a steady deterioration in relations between Tyrrell and Nicolson.³⁰ The latter had not been happy as permanent under-secretary. Dogged by ill-health, he had not proved to be an able administrator, and he had failed to establish with Grey the sort of close working relationship which Hardinge had enjoyed. Instead the two men had differed on domestic as well as foreign issues, and Nicolson had been compelled to witness the growing influence of Tyrrell over Grey and the formulation of foreign policy.³¹ Anxious to leave London, he began in August 1912 to

27. Nicolson to Hardinge, 9 Jan. 1913; Nicolson to Goschen, 14 Jan. 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/362. Nicolson to Hardinge, 29 Oct. 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/370. Minute by Nicolson on Bertie to Grey, 2 April 1913, B.D., ix, pt.2, no.794. In December 1913 Bertie pressed Grey not to accept Cambon's advice that Britain and France should press the Porte to renounce the appointment of a German Officer in charge of the Constantinople army corps. There was, he thought, always the danger that Russia might conclude an understanding with Germany and leave Britain in the lurch. According to Bertie's account, Grey accepted these recommendations and Nicolson 'consented when he saw that they had prevailed'. Memorandum by Bertie, 2 Dec. 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

28. Nicolson to Buchanan, 22 April 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/365

29. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/161. Bertie was not particularly happy about the intimate relations which Nicolson enjoyed with Paul Cambon since he feared that it might lead to indiscretions. Bertie to Tyrrell, 1 Dec. 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

30. Chirol to Hardinge, 18 April 1913, op.cit.

31. Chirol to Hardinge, 15 Feb. 1912, and 15 March 1912; Mallet to Hardinge, 27 July 1912, Hardinge MSS., 92. Chirol to Hardinge, 20 June 1913 and 22 May 1914; Sanderson to Hardinge, 1 Jan. 1914; Hardinge MSS., 93. Austin Lee to Bertie, 14 April 1914, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/188. Bertie himself admitted that 'Hardinge's innovation of everything passing through him to the Secretary of State has been an egregious failure. No-one can properly do the work which Hardinge's system entailed. In Nicolson's case the result has been that he neglects what he is supposed to do and accepts without enquiry what others suggest. Under his rule the office is in a state of chaos'. Memorandum by Bertie, 19 Dec. 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163. Bertie to Tyrrell, 15 Jan. 1915, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/189.

hanker after an appointment abroad, and in February 1913 he obtained from Grey a promise that he should be Bertie's successor at Paris. This, and the intrigues connected with his transfer, helped to push Bertie into the ranks of Nicolson's opponents.³²

The regulations of the Foreign Office provided that an appointment as head of mission should not exceed five years. Grey however, had intervened in order to secure the extension of Bertie's tenure until his seventieth birthday in August 1914. He had also suggested that Bertie might, like Monson, remain at his post until the end of his final year.³³ Indeed, it was when Bertie visited the Foreign Office on 22 September 1913 with a view to discussing this point with Grey that he learned from Mallet and Tyrrell of Nicolson's aspirations. The news did not please him, and he agreed with Tyrrell's contention that Nicolson's pro-Russian bias would put him into the hands of Izvolsky. What he believed was required at Paris was an ambassador, who would, if necessary, moderate French zeal for Russian desires, or assist the government in resisting Russian exactions. 'The French ministers', he observed, 'are frequently desirous to resist pressing appeals by Russia for French support when such support would not be consistent with the permanent interests of France, and they are glad if they can say that HM Govt. would object'. But Nicolson, he claimed, 'would be an out and out advocate at Paris and in London of Russian views'.³⁴

32. Nicolson to Grey, 14 Aug. 1912, Grey MSS., F.O.800/94.

33. The Foreign Office regulations also provided that members of the diplomatic service 'on attaining the age of 70 years shall be retired on the pension for which their services may qualify them'. There were, however, two notable exceptions to this rule amongst Bertie's contemporaries. Lord Pauncefoot, who was appointed British minister at Washington in 1889 was seventy-three when he died in office in 1902. When Lord Bryce was appointed ambassador to the United States in 1907 he was already sixty-nine.

As the matter of the extension of Bertie's stay at Paris until the end of 1914 also concerned the Treasury Grey had decided not to raise the subject until the time of his retirement approached. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 Sept. 1913, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187. Grey to Nicolson, 21 Oct. 1913, Grey MSS., F.O.800/94. Bertie to Hardinge, 19 Feb. 1914, Hardinge MSS., 93.

34. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 Sept. 1913, *ibid.* Memorandum by Bertie, 2 Dec. 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180.

From his talks with Mallet and Tyrrell Bertie gathered that Nicolson had been disappointed at the extension of his stay in Paris, and that Nicolson hoped to succeed him in August or September 1914. If Bertie were to remain at Paris until Christmas 1914, Nicolson would by then have passed the age limit for ambassadorial appointments, and Hardinge, who also desired the Paris embassy, might have returned from India.³⁵ The tactics employed by the permanent under-secretary to secure Paris were greatly resented by Bertie, who would have preferred that Hardinge should be his successor. He was particularly irritated when Nicolson, whom he dubbed the 'little blue eyed rogue', allowed out the secret of his promised appointment, and began to make enquiries about taking over the embassy. Indeed, Bertie seems to have been delighted at being able to substantiate Tyrrell's claim that Nicolson did not deal in a 'straight fashion' with Grey.

During a visit to London in December 1913 Bertie pressed upon Grey the unsuitability of Nicolson's appointment, and suggested that de Bunsen would be a better choice for Paris.³⁶ By then, however, Grey had committed himself, and while he was insistent that Bertie should complete the next year at Paris, he left him with few doubts about who would be his successor. 'Grey', Bertie noted, 'is a weak man and having refused Nicolson's applications for Constantinople and Vienna could not make up his mind to make a third refusal'.³⁷

35. Grey to Nicolson, 21 Oct. 1913; Nicolson to Grey, 21 Oct. 1913; Grey MSS., F.O. 800/94. Hardinge to Nicolson, 28 April 1913 and 8 June 1913; Hardinge to Chirol, 7 July 1913; Nicolson to Hardinge, 21 May 1913; Hardinge MSS., 93.

36. Bertie to Tyrrell, 20 Oct. 1913; memorandum by Bertie, 2 Dec. 1913; Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/173. Bertie to Tyrrell, 18 Oct. 1913; Tyrrell to Bertie, 22 Oct. 1913; Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/187. Nicolson to Bertie, 28 June 1914; Bertie to Tyrrell, 30 June 1914; Memoranda by Bertie, 25 July and 30 July 1914; Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/188. Bertie to Hardinge, 19 Feb. 1914, Hardinge MSS., 93.

37. Nicolson's future had still not been settled by July 1914. Chirol to Hardinge, 15 April 1914, Hardinge MSS., 93. Hardinge to Nicolson, 2 July 1914, Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/375. Lee to Bertie, 4 May 1914, Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/188. Memorandum by Bertie, 2 Dec. 1913, *ibid.*

Had Edward VII still been on the throne, Bertie might have tried to persuade him to use his influence in order to secure for Hardinge the reversion of the Paris embassy. But King George did not display as keen an interest in diplomatic appointments as his father had shown. He proved, however, to be no less of a problem for Bertie and his colleagues when it came to arranging such matters as a royal visit to Paris.

When in February 1912 Bertie discussed this subject with the king, he was distressed to find that he and his advisers were determined that, for the sake of monarchical solidarity, the first royal visits should be to Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. He thought to be absurd the idea of the king's private secretaries that monarchies rated before republics. Official visits were anyway in his view a 'corvée to the visitors and visited'. They had, Bertie later claimed, 'been much overdone in the past ten years'. Nevertheless, he warned the king that if he were to proceed with his proposed itinerary it would create an unfortunate impression in France, where he was already credited with being less sympathetic towards the French than his father.³⁸

Britain's own domestic troubles prevented the king from travelling abroad during 1912, but in the following March the subject was raised again. By then King George was able to support his case for going firstly to Berlin and Vienna with the argument that Poincaré was a junior head of state and should properly visit London before receiving him at Paris. Grey, who also would have preferred to see the matter dropped, sought Bertie's advice about whether the French would be 'huffy' if the

38. Grey was also of the opinion that it was important that the king should go to Paris before visiting other capitals. Memorandum by Bertie, 17 Feb. 1912; Bertie to Grey, 21 Feb. 1912; Bertie to Nicolson, 21 Nov. 1912; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187. Memorandum by Bertie, 19 Feb. 1912; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Bertie to Grey, 8 March 1912; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Grey to Asquith, 26 Feb. 1912, Grey MSS., F.O.800/100.

king went to Berlin before Paris. Indeed, he made the question of whether or not the king should make his visits dependent upon the likely reaction of the French.³⁹

Bertie readily admitted that as a matter of strict etiquette the king should await an official visit from Poincaré. He thought, however, that if a royal visit to Paris followed immediately after official visits to Berlin and Vienna, it 'would be too obviously an intended sop to a supposed slight to please the French public'. Instead, he recommended that the king should either withhold from going to Berlin and await a visit from Poincaré, or go to Vienna via Paris and there make a private call upon the president. The French, he warned Grey, 'are in a highly strung state owing to the intended additions to the German army which they consider to be with the object of menacing their independence of action politically', and a visit by the king to Berlin would only aid German agents in propogating reports of an Anglo-German rapprochement detrimental to French interests. Nevertheless, despite this advice, it was eventually settled in London that the king should go privately to Berlin for the wedding of the Duke of Cumberland's daughter in May, and that there should be a French presidential visit to England in June.⁴⁰

The official visit which it was finally decided the king should make to Paris in April 1914 was not without its difficulties for Bertie. He was placed in an acutely embarrassing position by the queen's objections to sharing a carriage with the French president's wife, of whose passé orageuse she had been informed

39. Poincaré later pointed out to Bertie that the French theory was that the office of president was impersonal. Therefore, he claimed, the question of a less senior head of state did not arise. Nicolson to Bertie, 29 Feb. 1912, and 19 March 1912; Bertie to Nicolson, 18 March 1912, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/187. Grey to Bertie, 5 March 1913; Bertie to Grey, 9 April 1913; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

40. Bertie to Grey, 8 March 1913, Bertie MSS., A, Ibid. Grey to Bertie, 27 March 1913; 2 April 1913; and 5 April 1913; Bertie to Grey, 12 April 1913; Grey MSS., F.O.800/54.

by the empress of Russia.⁴¹ Although after protests from Bertie, she agreed to ride with Madame Poincaré at the entry into Paris, and at the proposed military review, she resolutely refused to agree to the demands of the French protocol that the two ladies should accompany each other on all official occasions.⁴² Driven nearly to despair by Queen Mary's attitude towards Madame Poincaré, Bertie complained to Tyrrell on 16 April:

The ailment attributed to the latter lady (Mme.Poincaré) is not catching and if it were measles one and the first contact - to which no objection is made - would suffice to infect her companion in the carriage. The other drives would not add to the danger. The ways of providence and of Crowned Heads are inscrutable.⁴³

When 'violent cyphering' between the embassy and London failed to change the queen's mind, Bertie had to persuade the French protocol to respect her wishes.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, no harm was done to the entente. In fact the visit offered to Bertie his last chance to promote his pet scheme for assuring more effective co-operation between Britain and France in the event of a continental crisis.

The question of what stance Britain would adopt in a Franco-German war had once more been brought to the fore by the prospect of such a conflict arising out of the situation in the Balkans. While the Liberal government remained in office, even those officials, who, like Nicolson, advocated the conclusion of alliances with France and Russia, had to admit that such arrangements were out of the question. Grey had no wish either to split the cabinet, or to break with France, and he continued to insist that Britain's participation in a war would depend upon the circumstances in which it broke out, and the reaction of public

41. Mme.Poincaré had been divorced, and, it was rumoured in France, had been the mistress of a Marseilles cab driver. Bertie to Grey, 16 Jan.1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Memorandum by Bertie, 25 June 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

42. On 22 March 1914, Bertie recommended to Grey that if the queen persisted in her objection to riding with Mme.Poincaré 'the visit had better be abandoned on some plausible plea for it would do more harm than good'. Bertie to Grey, 22 March 1914, Grey MSS., FO.800/188.

43. Bertie to Tyrrell, 16 April 1914, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/188.

44. F.Ponsonby to Hardinge, 28 April 1914, Hardinge MSS., 105.

opinion.⁴⁵ In two cases, however, he felt reasonably certain about the course which the government would adopt. He told Gazonov on 24 September 1912 that public opinion 'would not support any aggressive war for revanche, or to hem Germany in'. On the other hand, if Germany were led by her 'great... unprecedented strength to crush France', he did not think that Britain could stand aside.⁴⁶

It was unlikely that any government in France would have deliberately have launched the country into a war with Germany for the recovery of her lost provinces. Yet Grey could hardly afford to neglect the chauvinistic nature of the press campaign which accompanied the pressure in France for the adoption of the three years service law, and the elevation of Poincare to the presidency of the republic.⁴⁷ The reports which he received from the Paris embassy were far from reassuring. During December 1912 and January 1913 Grahame drew Tyrrell's attention to the change of tone in the French press, and the confidence felt in French armaments as the result of their performance in the Balkan conflict. 'If this feeling increases and Germany is ever in difficulty - a general strike or something of the kind - and an adventurous minister is in power', he speculated, 'France might one day surprise us all'.⁴⁸ Moreover, while Bertie continued to

45. In January 1914 Lewis Harcourt, the colonial secretary, wrote to Grey deprecating the use of the term 'Triple Entente', and calling attention to the misunderstanding to which it was likely to give rise. Grey replied that he thought it best to leave things as they were. 'The alternatives', he observed, 'are either a policy of complete isolation in Europe or a policy of definite alliance with one or the other group of European powers'. Harcourt to Grey, 8 Jan. and 9 Jan. 1914; Grey to Harcourt, 10 Jan. and 11 Jan. 1914; Grey MSS., F.O.800/91. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Nicolson to Goschen, 11 March 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/364. Nicolson to Buchanan, 7 April 1914; Nicolson to de Bunsen, 27 April 1914; Carnock MSS., F.O.800/373.

46. Memorandum by Grey, 24 Sept. 1912, B.D., ix, pt. 1, no. 805.

47. E. Weber, pp. 106-128, D.E. Sumner, pp. 517-537. Bertie to Grey, 19 Feb. 1913, B.D., x, pt. 2, no. 461.

48. Grahame to Tyrrell, 5 Dec. 1912; 26 Jan. and 29 Jan. 1913; Grey MSS., F.O.800/54.

emphasize the pacific aspirations of the French, he too warned Grey on 3 March that in the 'present temper of the French people any incident with Germany might lead to war'. There are, he observed, 'many Frenchmen who think that war is predictable within the next two years and that it might be better for the French to have it soon'.⁴⁹

Bertie personally welcomed the French decision to strengthen their army. But though he assured Paléologue that he had no doubt that in the event of a German attack on France, the British government would soon announce their support of the French, he did nothing to encourage Grey to commit Britain to such a course.⁵⁰ On 23 June 1913 he advised the foreign secretary that one reason for not offering an alliance to France was that it 'might encourage the French to be too defiant to Germany'.⁵¹ Some nine months later, he told Wickham Steed, the foreign editor of The Times, that the advantage of the entente was that, while it made the French more confident in their power to resist German aggression and threats, the uncertainty of Britain's military aid acted as a 'restraint on the French Government in the way of making them very prudent in confrontations with the German Government in order not to appear as aggressors or provokers'.⁵²

49. Bertie to Grey, 3 March 1913; Grey to Bertie, 4 March 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. But in August Bertie reassured Grey: 'They (the French) dread... what a struggle with Germany would entail in sacrifice of life and money and the possibility of defeat, but by no means do they believe in the probability of another disastrous defeat such as that of 1870-1'. Annual Report for France, 1912, op.cit.

50. According to Paléologue Bertie told him on 5 June 1913; 'Si vous voulez que l'Angleterre vous aide en cas de péril national, il faut qu'elle vous sache résolu à vous défendre... Nous n'aimons pas secourir les gens qui ne veulent pas se battre'. Paléologue, Journal, pp.28, 31 and 147-148.

51. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June, 1913, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166

52. Memorandum enclosed in Bertie to Tyrrell, 9 March 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176.

Grey's dilemma was that France might be involved in a continental war in whose cause Britain had no interest, and over which public opinion and the majority of the cabinet were not prepared to fight. The outcome of such a conflict might, however, be German hegemony in Europe and the isolation of Great Britain. He told the king in a letter of 9 December 1912 that 'it might become necessary for England to fight for... the defence of her position in Europe and for the protection of her own future and security'.⁵³ Yet he had not felt able to tell Paul Cambon on 4 December anything more than that the British public would probably be more ready to fight if war arose from Austrian aggression rather than Serbian provocation.⁵⁴

In Bertie's opinion the French were less concerned with the question of whether Britain would come to their aid in a war, than with the danger that such help might arrive too late. 'All French Ministries', he explained to Wickham Steed, 'have... had the conviction that in the event of a war between France and Germany, England would be bound in her own interests to support France lest she be crushed'.⁵⁵ What they feared, he contended, was that there might be 'protracted discussions and valuable time lost in considering whether the casus foederis had arisen'. The French, he believed, would not provoke a war unless they were certain of having British and Russian military support. He feared

53. Grey to George V, 9 Dec. 1912, B.D., x, pt. 2, no. 453.

54. Grey to Bertie, 4 Dec. 1912, B.D., ix, pt. 2, no. 228.

55. Memorandum enclosed in Bertie to Tyrrell, 9 March 1914, *op.cit.*

however, that if Britain did not immediately aid France in a conflict, she might suffer a crushing defeat, and the injury to British interests by irreparable. These points Bertie put to Grey on the eve of the visit to London of Poincaré and Pichon in June 1913. He had derived the impression in Paris that the French had something in mind, and he warned Grey that he thought that they would endeavour to obtain some fresh assurances as to future consultations. Evidently he was thinking of an arrangement such as he himself had suggested in the previous year whereby the two powers would define their interests, and promise to consult each other in the event of their being menaced. Nevertheless, Grey thought that anything which went beyond the notes exchanged in 1912 would cause some resignations from the cabinet, and despite Bertie's reply that it 'contained so many members that some might be spared', he was reluctant to consider any new move.⁵⁶

Since neither of the French statesmen chose to raise the subject of a new arrangement with Britain, Bertie's expectations were not fulfilled.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Grey's decision to accompany the king on his state visit to Paris, and the desire of the Quai d'Orsay to satisfy Russian desires for a tightening of their relationship with England, gave him another opportunity to seek acceptance of

56. Nothing definite had been said by any member of the French ministry to lead Bertie to suspect that Poincaré would seek a new arrangement, but Bertie recorded 'hints had been dropped that there ought to be something definite to rely on'. An interview which Poincaré gave to a journalist of The Observer also led Bertie to suspect that the French were after something. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913, op.cit. Nicolson to Goschen, 24 June 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/366.

57. Bertie suspected that Paul Cambon had advised Pichon and Poincaré not to raise the subject of a new arrangement. Their conversations with British politicians and the reception given them by the public had, he thought, led them to concur in this advice. The visit was, however, marred by the refusal of Harcourt - one of the principal critics of the entente in the cabinet - to meet the French president. Memoranda by Bertie, 29 June 1913 and 27 July 1913; Bertie to Grey, 25 July 1913; Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/180. Memorandum by Bertie, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. Nicolson to Buchanan, 30 June 1913, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/366. Nicolson to Hardinge, 2 July 1913, Hardinge MSS., 93. Paleologue Journal, p.159.

his idea.⁵⁸ On 21 April 1914 Paul Cambon spoke with him about the possibility of opening Anglo-Russian naval conversations, and of the deficiencies of the entente. Although Bertie discouraged any hope of an alliance, he suggested to Cambon that there should be an exchange of notes between Britain, France, and Russia containing an undertaking similar to that which he had proposed to Grey in June. Such an arrangement might, he thought, 'owing to the attitude of the Triple Alliance', not be so opposed as previously by the British cabinet. The suggestion was considered a good one by Poincaré and Pichon's successor Gaston Doumergue, who agreed to raise it with Grey. Under the impression that it might have more chance of success if it were proposed by the French, Bertie deliberately absented himself from the meeting which he arranged for Grey with the French foreign minister on the afternoon of 23 April.⁵⁹

Again Bertie's aspirations were disappointed. During their interview Doumergue concentrated his attention upon various colonial differences between Britain and France, and upon persuading Grey of the 'necessity for doing something to make relations with Russia more secure'. Not until the end of their conversation did he raise the subject of a further exchange of notes, and even then his suggestion corresponded not to Bertie's idea, but to one put forward by Paléologue, who had recently succeeded Delcassé at St. Petersburg. Indeed, it appeared simply as an attempt to extend to Russia the provisions of the Anglo-French arrangements of November 1912. Ultimately, the only outcome of the meeting

58. On the origins of the Russian overture see: Sazonov to Benckendorff, 12 Feb. 1914; Benckendorff to Sazonov, 18 Feb. 1914; Sazonov to Izvolsky, 2 April 1914; Izvolsky to Sazonov, 9 April 1914; Siebert, pp. 712-716. Nicolson to Buchanan, 21 April 1914; Carnock MSS., F.O. 800/373. P. Cambon to J. Cambon, 29 April 1914, Correspondance, III, 64-65.

59. Memorandum by Bertie, 24 April 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O. 800/166. Gaston Doumergue was president of the council and foreign minister of France from December 1913 until June 1914.

was Grey's agreement to the communication of the Anglo-French notes to St. Petersburg, and a subsequent decision by the British government to commence conversations with Russia on possible naval co-operation.⁶⁰

During his conversation with Grey on 23 June 1913 Bertie assured him that it was no longer necessary to worry about the French arriving at an accommodation with Germany. Sufficient irritation, he thought, had been caused in France by the expansion of the German army to make that impossible.⁶¹ Nevertheless, he was still anxious to avoid giving unnecessary offence to the French. This in part explains his disapproval of the resumption in the spring of 1913 of negotiations between Britain and Germany for the revision of the territorial provisions of their agreement of 1898 on Portugal's colonies. Upset by the foreign secretary's expressed desire to reduce Britain's treaty obligations towards Portugal, he warned him on 27 June that the new arrangement with Germany, upon the publication of which Grey was also insisting, would cause a 'very disagreeable surprise' in France.⁶²

The French reaction to the negotiations was from the start confused by their lack of information about what was taking place between Britain and Germany. Only on 28 October, a week after the initialling of the new accord, did the Quai d'Orsay receive from the French embassy at Berlin any clear indication of what was

60. Memorandum by Bertie, 27 April 1914, *ibid.* Grey to Bertie, 1 May, and 21 May 1914, *B.D.*, x, pt.2, nos.542 and 543. Grey to Buchanan, 7 May 1914, *Grey MSS.*, F.O.800/74. Paleologue to Doumergue, 4 April and 15 April 1914; Note for the President of the Council, 17 April 1914; Note of the Minister, 24 April 1913, *D.D.F.3*, x, nos.69,106,111, and 155. K.Robbins, 283-285.

61. Grey seems anyway to have been convinced that a general understanding between France and Germany was out of the question. Bertie to Grey, 22 May 1913; Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913; *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/166. Grey to Bertie, 31 May, *Grey MSS.*, F.O.800/54.

62. Memorandum by Bertie, 29 June 1913, *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/176. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 July 1913, *Bertie MSS.*, A, F.O.800/180.

afoot.⁶³ Bertie himself was not acquainted with all the details of the negotiations, and not until January 1914 was Paul Cambon fully cognizant of what had been subject to revision. Indeed, initial French opposition to the new agreement was based largely upon the misapprehension that Britain had agreed to changes in the 1898 treaty in a sense detrimental to France's interests in the Congo basin. They objected both to the attribution to Germany of the reversion of Cabinda, and to the fact that the agreement would oblige Britain to co-operate with Germany in opposing the establishment of French interests in Angola and Mozambique.⁶⁴

In an endeavour to mitigate any danger to the entente and their interests in Africa, the French concentrated their efforts upon trying to prevent any publication of the Anglo-German arrangement.⁶⁵ They found in Bertie a willing ally. To him both Poincaré and Doumergue complained on 10 and 11 February 1914 of Britain's failure to consult France on the negotiations, and of the deplorable effect that the new accord would have upon French public opinion. It was regrettable, Poincaré said, that the matter had been raised again, especially as in the revised accord, Britain was waiving in Germany's favour any claims upon the islands of San Thome and Principe. He warned Bertie that

63. Although Cambon had been told by Grey in February 1913 that Britain and Germany were discussing the revision of their 1898 agreement, the French chargé d'affaires at London informed Pichon on 24 October that he did not believe in the existence of such negotiations. De Fleuriau to Pichon, 24 Oct. 1913; de Manneville to Pichon, 28 Oct. 1913; P. Cambon to Pichon, 29 Oct. 1913; D.D.F.3, viii, nos. 378, 391 and 397. Grey to Bertie 10 Feb. and 29 Oct. 1913, B.D., x, pt. 2, nos. 326 and 345. Bertie to Grey, 31 Oct. 1913, and minutes by Grey and Harcourt, Grey MSS., F.O.800/54.

64. Not until January 1914 did Paul Cambon appreciate the fact that provision had been made for Cabinda in the 1898 accord. Doumergue feared that Britain and Germany might also have arrived at an agreement on the future of the French Congo. P. Cambon to Doumergue, 10 Dec. 1913, D.D.F.3, vii, no. 607. P. Cambon to Doumergue, 8 Jan. 1914, D.D.F.3, ix, no. 35. Grey to Granville, 28 Nov. 1913; Grey to Bertie, 6 Jan. 1914, B.D., x, pt. 2, nos. 350 and 357. Notes journalières, 4 and 6 Feb. 1914, Poincaré MSS., (B.N.), N.A. Fr. 16026.

65. The French government were under the mistaken impression that publication of the revised Anglo-German agreement was desired by Berlin. Doumergue to de Fleuriau, 18 Dec. 1913; De Fleuriau to Doumergue, 8 Jan. and 27 Jan. 1914; Doumergue to P. Cambon, 20 Jan., 26 Jan., 10 Feb., and 18 Feb. 1914; D.D.F.3, ix, nos. 35, 92, 116, 191, 256 and 326. Note pour le Président de Conseil, 18 May 1914, N.S. 22, (A.A.E. Poincaré, iv, 52. P. Guillen, 'Les questions coloniales dans les relations franco-allemandes', Revue Historique, (1972), 97-98.

in the event of the arrangements being published, the French government would have to protest in defence of its interests, and on the basis of the Franco-German convention of November 1911. This had stipulated that in the event of there being any territorial changes in the Congo basin as the result of the action of one of the signatories, they would confer together along with the other powers who had signed the Berlin act of 1885.⁶⁶

Neither Doumergue nor Paul Cambon appear to have attached very much importance to the fate of San Thome and Principe, but Bertie warned Grey that Britain's renunciation of any claims to the islands would cause particular offence to public opinion in France. It would, he estimated, be regarded as a 'gratuitous gift to Germany that she should establish herself there, and this in spite of the injury which would thereby be caused to French interests, and without consultation of any kind with the French Government'. If the fresh engagements became known, he professed to fear that there would be an outcry in the French press, where it would be said that 'Perfide Albion had played her former part and has placated...Germany by the sacrifice of the interests of her friend France'.⁶⁷ In a private letter of 12 February he appealed to Grey: 'Can you avoid publication or will the German Government make the arrangements known in order to create a sore between France and England?'⁶⁸

The need to make preparations in London for the forthcoming royal visit to Paris allowed Bertie the opportunity to discuss

66. Bertie warned Poincaré that Harcourt was the author of the new Anglo-German arrangement. Notes journalières, 6, 10 and 14 Feb. 1914, Poincaré MSS., (B.N.), N.A.Fr., 16026. Poincaré, iv, 56-58. Bertie to Grey, 11 Feb. and 12 Feb. 1914, B.D., x, pt.2, nos.361 and 362.

67. Bertie to Grey, 11 Feb. 1914; Grey to Bertie, 18 Feb. 1914; B.D., x, pt.2, nos.361 and 364.

68. Bertie to Grey, 12 Feb. 1914, op.cit.

the negotiations with Grey and his colleagues in the Foreign Office. There he discovered that as a consequence of French pressure, and especially his report of his conversation with Poincaré, Grey had modified his attitude. He now hoped that owing to German objections to the publication of the British assurances to Portugal of 1898 and 1899, the new accord would be abandoned. Even the king, whom Bertie met on 20 February, told him that there would be no publication of anything until after his visit to France for he would not 'run the risk of the resulting hisses in the streets of Paris'.⁶⁹ It was doubtless, however, with some relief that Bertie learned that on 3 March Lichnowsky the German ambassador had suggested, and Grey agreed, that the matter should be dropped.⁷⁰

It is evident from Bertie's comments upon the negotiations for the revision of the 1898 treaty that he still regarded Germany as basically acquisitive and potentially mischievous. 'The German Government', he observed in August 1913, 'keep questions and grievances simmering in the pot alongside the fire, ready at any moment to put it on and boil up for use when thought available'.⁷¹ Nevertheless, he was less inclined than he had once been to credit Germany with hostile intentions. The absence of any major crisis in either Franco-German or Anglo-German relations no doubt contributed to this modification in his outlook. More important, however, seems to have been his assumption that

69. Memorandum by Bertie, 16-20, Feb. 1914, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/188. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 Feb. 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176. Nicolson to Goschen, 24 Feb. 1914, Carnock MSS., F.O.800/372. Nicolson to Hardinge, 25 Feb. 1914, Hardinge MSS., 93.

70. Grey to Bertie, 4 March 1914, B.D., x, pt.2, no.368. Tyrrell to Bertie, 4 and 5 March 1914. Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/176. Poincaré, iv, 69-70. Prince von Lichnowsky was German ambassador at London from 1912 until 1914.

71. Annual Report for France, 1912, op.cit.

German ambitions had been successfully contained.⁷²

Peace between the great powers was in Bertie's estimation the result of their recognition of the existing balance of forces in Europe. Thus when in June 1913 the king informed him that the Russian emperor had recently referred to the Anglo-Russian understanding as the best guarantee of peace, Bertie retorted that 'the best guarantee of peace between the great powers is that they are all afraid of each other'.⁷³ Fear of a British naval intervention had in his opinion restrained Germany from resorting to war in 1911, and Russian apprehension about German military might had, he believed, caused Russia to adopt a more cautious policy in the Balkans. Similarly he did not share the concern felt by Grey over the German government having learnt as the result of a leakage to the press that Britain had agreed to the opening of naval conversations with Russia. There was, he told Grey on 25 June 1914, advantage in the Germans suspecting that 'in the event of a conflict...a British fleet would give active aid to Russia'. When Grey protested that Britain was now on good terms with Germany, and that he wished both to avoid a revival of friction with her, and to discourage the French from provoking her, Bertie ventured to remind him that the Germans might simply be seeking a pretext for continuing naval competition. Nevertheless, he thought that the Germans were now genuinely alarmed by the prospective increase in Russia's armed forces, and her construction with

72. This would seem to be implied by Bertie in a remark made half in jest to Paléologue in December 1913. Of the German emperor Bertie observed: 'C'est un grand cabotin, qui malgré ses vantardises mesure parfaitement tout ce qu'il risquerait dans une guerre contre nous trois (France, Britain and Russia) ...Et puis il ne veut pas que nous lui coulions sa belle Flotte'. Paléologue, *Journal*, p.247.

73. Memorandum by Bertie, 23 June 1913, *Bertie MSS.*, B.F.O.800/187 Tyrrell appears to have held a similar view of the international situation. Chirol reported to Hardinge in April 1913, Tyrrell seems to think 'that we can now snap our fingers both at the Triple Alliance and at Russia'. Chirol to Hardinge, 10 April 1913, *Hardinge MSS.*, 93.

French aid of strategic railways in Europe.⁷⁴

Despite reports of Russia's growing military potential, Bertie had strong doubts about her ability 'to make an attacking campaign against Germany and Austria.'⁷⁵ What, however, did disturb him was the possibility that the Germans might upset the military balance in western Europe by taking further measures to protect themselves in the east. They might, as Grey later suggested to him, again augment their armed forces, or decide upon an early war with Russia. In either case Bertie thought that the French were bound to be affected. Although he considered that they were unlikely to want to risk the calamities of even a successful war, he calculated that in the long run they would not be capable of competing with the German military budget. 'This might', he wrote in a memorandum of 27 June, 'make the French desperate and an incident might bring about a conflict'. Yet the idea that the events which had place at Sarajevo on the following afternoon might constitute such an 'incident' seems not to have entered Bertie's mind.⁷⁶

The assassination of the Arch-duke Francis Ferdinand and his wife did not at first give Bertie serious cause for alarm.

74. Memorandum by Bertie, 27 June 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. Bertie to Grey, 28 June 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. The German government had learned that Grey had consented to the opening of naval conversations between Britain and Russia from their spy in the Russian embassy in London. At the instigation of the Wilhelmstrasse information about these conversations was published in the Berliner Tageblatt. M.Ekstein, 'Sir Edward Grey and Imperial Germany in 1914', Journal of Contemporary History, vi, (1971), 121-131.

75. Memorandum by Bertie, 24 April 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166. On the development of Russia's military strength and her preparations for war see: L.C.F.Turner, 'The Russian Mobilization in 1914', Journal of Contemporary History, iii (1968), 65-88; and D.N.Collins, 'The Franco-Russian Alliance and Russian Railways', Historical Journal, xvi (1973), 777-788.

76. Memorandum by Bertie, 27 June 1914, op.cit. Memorandum by Bertie, 16 July 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171.

At the beginning of July he found it quite expedient to complain to the Austrian ambassador at Paris of Russia's conduct in Persia and of the dangers which it posed for Britain's interests. Shortly afterwards he left France to commence a fortnight's leave in England.⁷⁷ ^{Now did} Not that the attitude assumed by Grey, whom he met on 16 July, ^{gave} gave him reason to suspect that a war crisis was ^miminent. On the contrary the foreign secretary seems to have been primarily concerned with the effects upon Germany of British and Russian policies. He told Bertie that he had assured Lichnowsky that the military and naval conversations between Britain, France, and Russia had 'not impaired England's liberty of action', and that she was 'quite free from any binding engagements'. Germany, he explained to Bertie, had once 'feigned alarm at the encircling policy falsely attributed to H.M. Government under the inspiration of King Edward', but she was 'now really frightened at the growing strength of the Russian army'. He referred also to the possibility of Germany launching a defensive war against Russia, yet neither he nor Bertie made reference to the possibility of this resulting from an Austro-Serbian dispute.⁷⁸ Indeed, even after his return to Paris on 20 July Bertie still felt able to propose to Tyrrell that since the embassy flues were in need of repair, he might proceed to Martigny on 26 July in order to commence his cure.⁷⁹

Only after Bertie learned of the terms of the Austrian note to Serbia of the 23 July did he decide to remain at his post.⁸⁰

77. Szescen to M.A., 4 July 1914, Ö-U, viii, no.10048.

78. Memorandum by Bertie, 16 July 1914, op.cit.

79. On this proposal Grey minuted: 'It must depend upon the European situation, if there is no acute and dangerous crisis Sir F. Bertie must of course avoid the soot'. Bertie to Tyrrell, 22 July 1914, and minute by Grey, Grey MSS., F.O.800/55.

80. Grey to Bertie, 25 July 1914, B.D., xi, no.98. Gordon Lennox, i,1.

Not that he believed that either the Austrian, German, or Russian governments had decided upon war. ⁸¹ In 1912 and 1913 he felt a degree of sympathy for the Austrians, who, he assumed, would not have addressed such stringent terms to Belgrade unless they had proof of the complicity of Serbian officials in the murder of the arch-duke.⁸¹ He urged Grey on 27 July that if he were to convene meetings at London with the French, German, and Italian ambassadors, he should call them 'consultations' for the Austrians would resent the appearance of being 'treated as a Balkan Minor State'.⁸² Moreover, while he suspected that the 'military party' at Berlin might regard the present moment as more favourable for Germany than later when Russia's military reforms would be complete, and her strategic railways built, he did not think that the German emperor and his government wanted war.⁸³ Nor for that matter did he agree with the suggestion made in L'Écho de Paris that they had been accessories before the fact to the Austrian ultimatum. 'If they had been', he observed, 'the German Emperor would not have been away yachting'.⁸⁴ Indeed, although he felt able to assure Count Szecsen on 24 July that Russia 'wird nicht Kampf aufnehmen', there was little doubt in his mind that the peace of Europe was dependent upon the course which the government at St. Petersburg might choose to take.⁸⁵

81. Ibid. Bertie enjoyed fairly good relations with Szecsen the Austrian ambassador at Paris, whom he had first met during his embassy at Rome. On Anglo-Austrian relations during the war crisis of 1914 see F.R. Bridge, 'The British Declaration of War on Austria-Hungary in 1914', Slavonic and East European Review, 47 (1969), 401-422.

82. Bertie to Grey, 27 July 1914, B.D., xi, no.192.

83. Gordon Lennox, i, 2.

84. Bertie to Grey, 25 July and 27 July 1914, B.D., xi, nos. 123 and 192.

85. Szecsen to M.A., 24 July 1914, Ö-U, viii, no.10679.

On 27 July Bertie recorded in his diary: 'I cannot believe in war unless Russia wants it'. 'If', he observed, 'the Emperor of Russia adhered to the absurd and obsolete claim that she is the protectress of all Slav States, however bad their conduct, war is probable'. A Franco-German war might thus materialize in circumstances which were hardly conducive to co-operation between Britain and France. Serbia was not in Bertie's opinion an issue upon which Britain ought to fight, and as he warned Bienvenu Martin, the acting French minister of foreign affairs, on 25 July, public opinion in Britain would not sanction a war in support of Russia if she 'picked' a quarrel with Austria over the Austro-Serbian difficulty. The situation which Bertie had long dreaded seemed likely to occur. He reasoned:

It is a pity that the quarrel is not one to interest us at the beginning if there is to be a European conflict, for our aid would then be of greatest value, but later on it will earn no gratitude and might be of little use to France.⁸⁶

Bertie hoped that such a war might be avoided if the French were able to restrain their Russian ally. Public opinion in France, he thought, would not be in favour of backing Russia if she quarrelled with Austria, and the French government, he concluded, would probably advise the Russians to moderate any 'excessive zeal' which they might display to protect Serbia.⁸⁷

In a private letter to Grey of 27 July, in which he expressed his fears about Russia's intentions, he pressed the foreign secretary to encourage the French to put pressure upon the Russians not to assume the role of protectors of the Slavs whatever their conduct.⁸⁸ At the same time he felt the need to attempt to manage public opinion in France.

86. Gordon Lennox, i, 2-3. Bertie to Grey, 25 July 1914, B.D., xi, nos.129. J.B.Bienvenu-Martin was minister of justice in the government of René Viviani. During the latter's absence from France during July 1914 he was acting foreign minister.

87. Bertie to Grey, 25 July 1914, B.D., xi, no.134.

88. Bertie to Grey, 27 July 1914, B.D., ix, no.192. Luigi Albertini has criticized Bertie's lack of understanding in offering this advice. Yet the essential point was that Bertie considered the crisis to be a result of Russia's diplomacy. L.Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914 (3 vols., English trans. 1952-1957), ii, 400.

Bertie was particularly worried by the way in which the efforts of the German ambassador at Paris to localize the Austro-Serbian quarrel were being used by a section of the French press to demonstrate that Austria and Germany were using the murders at Sarajevo as an excuse for humiliating the triple entente.

L'Écho de Paris, which Bertie believed to be in close touch with the Russian embassy, was, he thought, trying to make it appear that Schoen had given the Quai d'Orsay to understand that unless France kept out of the dispute, Germany would deal with her, and there would be a European conflagration. If the French public were convinced that the Germans were trying to keep France quiet, then Bertie feared, it would cause great indignation in Paris, and the task of those interested in stimulating French public opinion to range itself decidedly on the side of Russia in the present controversy would have been facilitated'.⁸⁹

Schoen's effort to allay the press campaign against Germany in France, and his desire to give the impression that he was working in unity with the French government in order to avoid a conflict, gained Bertie's approval and support. He was critical, however, of the officials of the Quai d'Orsay, whom he considered to be insufficiently coulant with his German colleague.⁹⁰ The foreign ministry's refusal to meet Schoen's wishes by issuing a communiqué describing his meeting with Bienvenu Martin as 'very friendly', and indicating 'solidarity' between the powers, led Bertie to propose to Grey that Britain should urge the French to

89. Bertie to Grey, 25 July, and 27 July 1914; B.D., xi, nos. 123 and 193. E.M. Carroll, pp. 293-294.

90. Bertie to Grey, 27 July 1914, B.D., xi, no. 192. Bertie had no love for Philippe Berthelot, the acting political director of the Quai d'Orsay. During the war he described Berthelot as being 'of anti-British sentiment', without judgement but of pushing and intriguing nature'. Bertie to Grey, 14 Feb. 1916, Lloyd George MSS., D/19/7/10.

issue such a notice. But his advice was opposed by Nicolson and Eyre Crowe. The latter believed that the Germans were trying to keep the other great powers out of the dispute, and that the French feared that any declaration of solidarity would be expected by the Germans to undermine the Franco-Russian alliance.⁹¹ With this Grey seems to have agreed, and he informed Bertie on 28 July that he could not press the French to risk separating themselves from Russia.⁹²

Bertie appears in the meanwhile to have given vent to his fears about the prospect of a European war in a peculiarly unguarded fashion. On the morning of 28 July the Austrian ambassador at Paris informed his government that Bertie had told him that the active intervention of Russia would lead France and Germany to take part. 'England', the British ambassador had observed, 'würde zusehen, müsste aber, wenn Frankreich von Vernichtung bedroht, eingreifen'.⁹³ Unfortunately Szécsen's telegram does not reveal the context in which this statement was made. It may be that Bertie had simply tried to explain to Szécsen the position that the British cabinet was likely to adopt, and that he had sought to warn him that a successful German invasion of France would mean Britain's involvement in the conflict. But, whatever the case, Szécsen's report was regarded in Vienna as sufficiently important to be communicated to the German ambassador there.⁹⁴ Indeed it may help explain Bethmann Hollweg's declaration to Goschen on 29 July that Germany did not contemplate the crushing of France, and that she was ready to give every assurance

91. Bertie to Grey, 27 July 1914 with minutes by Eyre Crowe and Nicolson, B.D., xi, no.184.

92. Grey to Bertie, 28 July 1914, B.D., xi, no.204.

93. Szécsen to M.A., 28 July 1914, O-U, viii, no.10906.

94. Tschirschky to A.A., 28 July 1914, Karl Kautsky (ed.), Die Deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch, 1914, (4 vols., Berlin 1927), ii, no.329.

if Britain remained neutral that she 'aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France'.⁹⁵

That Bertie was prepared to speak so freely to his Austrian colleague was an indication of the cordial relations then prevailing between the two diplomats. By contrast Bertie viewed with trepidation the return of Izvolsky from St. Petersburg, where he had been for the visit of Poincaré and the French premier, Viviani. After learning from Lord Granville, his new councillor, that Izvolsky had told him at a dinner party that war was inevitable, Bertie commented that he would do 'a good deal of mischief in formenting a war spirit here'.⁹⁶ Yet, according to the Russian ambassador, war, if it came, would be the fault of England. If she had at once declared her solidarity with Russia and France, he insisted to Granville, Germany would have hesitated.⁹⁷

The question of what position Britain should adopt in the event of France being drawn by her alliance with Russia into a war with Germany was one which had to be answered by Grey, his cabinet colleagues, and parliament. It was not an issue which Bertie played any very decisive role in helping to resolve.⁹⁸ When on 30 July Poincaré suggested to him that there would be no war if Grey were to announce that in the event of a Franco-German conflict resulting from differences between Austria and Serbia, Britain would come to the aid of France, Bertie responded by simply endeavouring to explain the problems faced by the government in making such a declaration.⁹⁹ According to

95. Goschen to Grey, 29 July 1914, B.D., xi, no.293.

96. Gordon Lennox, i, 1 and 3. René Viviani was president of the council from June 1914 until October 1915. He was also foreign minister until 26 August 1914. George Leveson-Gower the 3rd Earl Granville was transferred from the British embassy at Berlin to Paris in 1913. There he was councillor until 1917.

97. Bertie to Grey, 28 July 1914, B.D., xi, 216.

98. Cameron Hazlehurst, Politicians at War, July 1914 to May 1915, (London, 1971), pp.25-117. K.Robbins, pp.285-297.

99. Bertie to Grey, 30 July 1914, B.D., xi, nos.318 and 373.

Poincaré's account of this conversation, Bertie also told him that he thought as he did.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, there is no other evidence to suggest that Bertie believed the time to be right for a public statement on Britain's intentions, and he certainly did not press the idea on Grey. On the contrary, while he informed the foreign secretary that the feeling in Paris was that Germany would not dare risk a war with Britain for fear of a naval blockade, he also warned him of the dangers of declaring Britain solidaire with France. 'If we give an assurance of armed assistance to France and Russia now, Russia', he observed, 'would become more exacting and France would follow in her wake'. The French, he complained, 'instead of putting pressure on the Russian Government to moderate their zeal expect us to give the Germans to understand that we mean fighting if war break out'.¹⁰¹

In London Grey offered no solace to the French. He informed Paul Cambon on 31 July that although he had told the German ambassador that in the event of a Franco-German war Britain would be drawn in, he could give no pledge to the French.¹⁰² The Austro-Serbian quarrel was, as Bertie noted that day in his diary, a 'bad subject on which to make a declaration of solidarity with France'.¹⁰³ But the rapid events in the east, the military prepara-

100. Poincaré, iv, 417.

101. Bertie to Grey, 30 July 1914, B.D., xi, no.320. Advice such as Bertie offered may well have reinforced Grey's own inclination towards relying on Germany to restrain Austria. M.Ekstein, 'Some Notes on Sir Edward Grey's Policy in July 1914', The Historical Journal xv (1972), 321-324. On French policy towards Russia during July 1914 see: P.Rénouvin, 'La politique française en juillet 1914 d'après les Documents diplomatiques français', Revue de l'histoire de la Guerre Mondiale, xv (1937), 11-12.

102. Grey to Bertie, 31 July and 1 Aug.1914, B.D., xi, nos.352, 367 and 447. Nevertheless, Grey's warning to Lichnowsky appears to have helped to reassure Poincaré. 'L'Angleterre', he noted on 1 August, 'a enfin parlé à l'Allemagne dans les sens que nous désirions mais elle a refusé de rien nous promettre'. On the next day he wrote: 'L'opinion anglaise évolue sensiblement en notre faveur'. Notes journalières, 1 and 2 Aug.1914, Poincaré MSS., (B.N.), N.A.Fr.16027.

103. Gordon Lennox, i, 6.

tions in France and Germany, and Schoen's enquiry of Viviani as to what France's position would be in a Russo-German conflict, had by the evening of the 31st helped to convince Bertie that war was a near certainty. In these circumstances he was anxious that Britain should be able to aid the French before they were defeated.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, once war had commenced between Germany and Russia, and German forces had entered Luxembourg, Bertie began to show genuine concern over the prospect of Britain appearing to desert France. So serious did he judge the situation that he had the main gates of the embassy building closed in case the French demonstrations of friendship should change to those of opprobrium. 'I have', he observed in his diary of 2 August, 'been feeling sick at heart that Perfidious Albion should really become applicable'.¹⁰⁵

In spite of his personal feelings, the only encouragement which Bertie gave to Grey to commit Britain to the support of France was contained in an appeal not to Britain's honour, but to her interests in the outcome of the war. This he made in a brief private note of 3 August, which he wrote after learning that Grey had on the previous day assured Paul Cambon that the Royal Navy would protect the northern coasts of France, but had deprecated the sending of a British army to the continent.¹⁰⁶ Bertie told Grey that he was not surprised by the government's decision not to send a military force to France, but, he observed

I think that it would be of advantage to us to give naval aid in the war, for it would bring it to an end sooner by starving Germany and it would give us a locus standi to determine the conditions of peace.¹⁰⁷

If France were victorious, then, he reasoned in his diary, she would not be under an obligation to Britain, and 'could not be

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., 1,8.

106. Grey to Bertie, 2 Aug.1914, B.D.,xi, no.487.

107. Bertie to Grey, 3 Aug.1914, B.D., xi,no.566.

expected to consider our interests when making terms with Germany'.¹⁰⁸

Bertie's argument was similar to the one which he had so frequently used in the past: Britain must either support France or see her eventually settle with Germany on terms disadvantageous to British interests. Nevertheless, the absence of any pressure on Bertie's part for the despatch of an army to France was surprising in view of his previous efforts to maintain a diplomatic framework which would allow Britain to supply aid in the early stages of a conflict with Germany. Even more surprising is the fact that on 4 August Bertie refused to sanction a telegram to Grey in which Colonel Yarde-Buller, his military attaché, emphasized the importance of sending an expeditionary force to France. 'It had', Bertie observed, 'been decided for good reasons not to send such a force in present circumstances and the telegram ...would serve no useful purpose'.¹⁰⁹ Such conduct can perhaps be explained by Bertie's recognition of the practical difficulties which Grey would face in persuading his colleagues of the need to act with France, and the faith which he himself had in the idea of naval blockade as an instrument of war.¹¹⁰ Moreover, once war had commenced in Europe, Bertie's primary objective was to secure a British commitment to the cause of France.¹¹¹

108. Gordon Lennox, i, 10.

109. Bertie to Tyrrell, 4 Aug. 1914, Bertie MSS., AF.O.800/166. Colonel H. Yarde-Buller was military attaché at Paris during 1914.

110. Cameron Hazlehurst has recently examined the reasons for the decision taken by the British Cabinet not to 'propose to Parliament at this moment to send an expeditionary military force to the Continent'. While he finds it difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion on this, he points out: 'Whatever was in Asquith's mind, probably more than half of the cabinet acquiesced in the ensuing developments on the basis of a limited and erroneous conception of what British participation in a European War would mean'. It is probable that Bertie recognized that Grey would find it far easier to make a commitment to France if the idea of a military expedition to the continent were for the moment put aside. Hazlehurst, pp. 86-91.

111. On 31 July Bertie noted in his diary: 'If at the beginning we were with the French, Germany would probably be starved by our Fleet; the German Fleet would most likely stay in the Baltic, and the German mercantile marine would be wiped out'. Gordon Lennox, i, 10.

Bertie was relieved by the German invasion of Belgium, which, he predicted, would 'rouse the wrath of the British Lion'. By then Germany's diplomacy and military action had led him to reinterpret the course of recent events. 'Germany', he commented on 4 August, 'was determined to have war, and tried all she knew to lure us into abstention from the struggle'.¹¹² In contrast to his earlier criticisms of Russian policy towards the Balkan states, he now attributed war to 'Hohenzollern ambitions and the fears of the Habsburgs that their Slav subjects would fall away from them'. Not that he could find much to rejoice about in the outbreak of a conflict which he estimated would not soon be over. It might, he ruminated, provide Britain with the opportunity to share in smashing the power of the Hohenzollerns, who had been 'a curse to the world for just fifty years when they began with poor little Denmark'. But if he now blamed Germany for the war, he did not forget that other forces also menaced British interests. On 7 August he added in his diary a cautious, but prophetic, note with regard to German military power. May 'it come to an end', he observed, 'and not be replaced by that of another Power such as Russia'.¹¹³

Bertie's stance during the final week of July 1914 contrasted strangely with that which he had adopted during the two Moroccan crises. Far from blaming Germany for bringing the great powers to the brink of war, he seems initially to have under-estimated the extent of the German governments involvement in the development of the Austro-Serbian dispute.¹¹⁴ Unlike

112. Ibid, i, 10.

113. On the departure of the embassy's French employees Bertie commented 'we hoped to see each other again at the end of the war; They may see each other but not me, for the war will not be over soon. What carnage and suffering, and how disgusting the cause!' Ibid., i, 9 and 15.

114. See for instance Fischer, 421-484. The opinions expressed by Bertie in July 1914 also contrast sharply with the anti-German flavour of the ideas he expressed in the remainder of his diary. G.P.Gooch, Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy (London, 1940) pp. 160-161.

Eyre Crowe and Nicolson, he withheld from making frantic appeals to Grey to range Britain alongside France and Russia, and instead he emphasized the dangers involved in allowing the Russians to believe that they could rely on British support.¹¹⁵ He even advised Grey to intervene with the quai d'Orsay in order to persuade the French to be more accommodating in their dealings with the German ambassador. Indeed, Luigi Albertini has suggested that the inexperienced Bienvenu-Martin was under Bertie's influence and that in default of better advice he failed to shatter 'the German illusion that they could save the peace while sacrificing Serbia and humiliating the other Great Powers'.¹¹⁶ The course recommended by Bertie was, however, quite in line with the views which he had frequently expressed with regard to Russia's diplomacy in the Balkans. He had little sympathy, with the aspirations of the Serbians, and their fate was not in his opinion a matter vital to the interests of Britain, France, or Russia. Yet, he had no doubt about the importance for Britain of maintaining the continental equilibrium, and of the need to ensure for her a voice in any future peace settlement. These interests could in Bertie's opinion only be secured through her participation in the war with Germany.

115. Eyre Crowe to Grey, 31 July 1914; Nicolson to Grey, 1 Aug. 1914; B.D., vii, nos. 369 and 446. Nicolson to Hardinge, 5 Sept. 1914, Hardinge MSS., 93. Steiner, pp. 154-164.

116. Albertini, ii, 400.

Conclusion.

The war was not welcomed by Bertie. It did, however, allow him the opportunity to remain at his post for another three and a half years, for on 22 November 1914 Grey asked him to 'stay on and see the war through'.¹ Moreover, in the following June his services were rewarded with the offer of a peerage, and he accepted the title of Lord Bertie of Thame.² But Bertie did not find it easy to accommodate himself to the exigencies of war-time diplomacy. Military matters naturally assumed a new importance in Anglo-French relations, and he increasingly found his role impinged upon by the presence in Paris of those who had, or claimed to have, a better understanding of such issues.

Bertie was especially irritated by what he termed the 'busybodies' who represented themselves to be 'on missions of enquiry inspired by persons of authority in England'.³ Amongst these was Lord Esher, who though officially only a sub-commissioner of the Red Cross at Paris, was after February 1915 employed there as an intermediary between the British and French

1. Gordon Lennox, i, 75-76. Bertie was not, however, pleased by the king's observation to him that as he was to remain at Paris he supposed that he hoped the war would last long. Bertie imagined that it was 'H.M.'s idea of being "funny". Note by Bertie, 10 Dec. 1914, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/188. Memorandum by Bertie, 19 Dec. 1914, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/163.

2. Bertie had been left the estate of Thame by his father. Alfred Scott-Gatty to Bertie, 3 June 1914; Bertie to Asquith, 4 June 1915; Bertie to College of Arms, 7 June 1915, Bertie MSS., B., F.O.800/189.

3. Bertie to Grey, 30 Nov. 1915, Lloyd George MSS., D19/7/7. Bertie to Grey, 24 May 1916, Lloyd George MSS., D19/7/14. Derby to Lloyd George, 30 Sept. 1916, Lloyd George MSS., E1/2/2. The declining influence of the permanent officials of the foreign service during the war is examined in Roberta M. Warman, 'The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence in the Making of Foreign Policy, 1916-1918'. Historical Journal, xv (1972), 133-159.

civil and military authorities.⁴ In the absence of a unified command there was certainly scope in France for someone with Esher's experience of British defence planning. But Bertie through whom the French had previously been inclined to communicate with the British government on matters relating to the prosecution of the war, felt Esher to represent a challenge to his authority. Relations between the two men steadily deteriorated, and during 1915 and 1916 Bertie complained frequently to colleagues and ministers alike about Esher's activities. His information, Bertie claimed, was drawn from 'tainted sources', and the reports which he spread about the situation in France unduly pessimistic.⁵

Bertie's attitude was resented by Esher, and after the collapse of Asquith's government and the disappearance of Grey from the Foreign Office, he began to agitate for some radical change in the style of Britain's representation in France. In this he was aided by the ambassador's declining state of health, and the aspirations of his military attache, Le Roy-Lewis, to secure for himself the supervision of the various British military agencies at Paris.⁶ To Lord Derby, the secretary of state for war, Esher complained on 9 May 1917 of the inadequacies of

4. Reginald Baliol Brett, 2nd Viscount Esher had been 'unofficial' member of the C.I.D. and was therefore well-acquainted with Britain's pre-war military planning. His role in Paris during the war is discussed in detail in Peter Fraser, Lord Esher, A political biography (London, 1973), pp.260-359. Bertie to Hardinge, 6 Aug.1916, Lloyd George MSS., E3/14/2. Notes by Bertie, 5 Aug.1916; Bertie to Hardinge, 6 Nov.1916; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/190. Bertie to Hardinge, 2 May 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191.

5. Memorandum by Bertie, 30 Oct.1915, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/177. Memorandum by Bertie, 10 April 1916; Bertie to Stamfordham, 10 May and 18 Aug.1916; Bertie to Hardinge, 18 Sept.1916; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. Hardinge to Bertie, 8 Nov.1916, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/167. Bertie to Hardinge, 24 Aug.1916, Lloyd George MSS., E3/14/6.

6. Colonel Herman Le Roy-Lewis was Bertie's military attache from 1915 until 1918. He corresponded with Lloyd George and according to the military correspondent of The Times at Paris, 'was the intimate ...of all leading French Ministers'. C. à Court-Repington, The First World War 1914-1918 (2 vols., London, 1920), ii. 409. Le Roy-Lewis to Lloyd George, 18 Aug. and 22 Aug.1916, Lloyd George MSS., F3/14/4 and 5. Bertie to Hardinge, 2 May and 5 May 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191.

Bertie and his staff. 'They live', he observed, 'in a small circumscribed area that is supposed to be "smart" and is indescribably ignorant, and pitifully ineffective'. He urged both Derby and Lloyd George to completely separate war work from the normal business of the embassy, to send Bertie on leave, and put under Le Roy-Lewis a secretariat responsible for all business connected with the war.⁷

There was some truth in Esher's criticism of the embassy, when in September 1914 Delcasse had attempted to describe the military situation in France to him, Bertie 'could not and did not pretend to understand'.⁸ Field Marshal Haig, who was not ill-disposed towards Bertie, observed in February 1916, that the ambassador was 'quite out of touch with what was happening in the military world'.⁹ Yet Esher also exaggerated Bertie's shortcomings. His friendship with Gunzburg was, for instance, regarded by Esher in a distinctly sinister light. He accepted both the insinuation that Bertie's handling of British commercial interests had been influenced by his having been promised the chairmanship of Gunzburg's Central Mining Company, and Le Roy-Lewis's report that the ambassador had passed embassy telegrams to Gunzburg. Such behaviour was quite uncharacteristic of Bertie, but this and his confinement to bed with pneumonia during March and April 1917

7. The 17th Earl of Derby was secretary of state for war in Lloyd George's government from 1916 until 1918 when he succeeded Bertie as ambassador to France. R.S.Churchill, Lord Derby, 'King of Lancashire' (London, 1959), p.360.

8. Gordon Lennox, i, 28.

9. Field Marshall Douglas Haig had succeeded Sir John French as commander of the British forces in France in December 1916. Although he was prepared to complain to Esher about Bertie's conduct it is also clear that Haig liked Bertie as a person. In November 1916 he wrote to his wife: Esher 'has not come between me and old Bertie'. Fraser, p.324. R.Blake (ed.), The Private Papers of Douglas Haig, 1911-1919 (London, 1952), pp.135 and 180.

provided Esher with ammunition against him.¹⁰

Fortunately for Bertie he made an early recovery from his illness and in its aftermath he sought to secure his position at Paris. To that end he tried to bring Le Roy-Lewis more effectively under his control, and to ingratiate himself with the prime minister.¹¹ The latter, who visited the embassy on 20 April, assured Bertie that he had not been consulted on the subject of his recall, but Esher seems nevertheless to have succeeded in mounting a substantial campaign against him.¹² Even Painlevé, the French minister of war, was led to complain to Derby about Bertie's conduct, and Henry Norman, a liaison officer with the ministry of munitions, pressed on Lloyd George the need for a change in the Paris embassy.¹³ So serious was the situation

10. Gunzburg's German-Jewish connexions seem to have made him 'suspect' in the eyes of some circles in Britain. Bertie, however, stoutly defended his friend. Hardinge to Bertie, 9 March 1917; Bertie to Hardinge, 12 March 1917; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. Grahame to Drummond, 12 March 1917, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/169. Bertie to Balfour, Lloyd George MSS., F51/4/10.

11. Rough notes by Bertie, 20 April 1917; Bertie to Hardinge, 22 April, 5 May, 19 May, 24 May and 25 May 1917; Hardinge to Bertie, 21 May 1917, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/191.

12. Rough notes by Bertie, ibid. Lloyd George seems to have been impressed by his interview with Bertie. But when he subsequently told Hardinge that he thought the ambassador to be 'a splendid fellow' he was probably referring to his health. Hardinge to Bertie, 27 April 1917, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/169. Bertie believed that 'Caillaux and some pacifist financiers, chiefly 'jews' were engaged in an intrigue against him. Hardinge appears to have shared this view. Bertie to Balfour, 16 June 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. A Court-Repington, ii, 24. Esher to Lloyd George, 6 May and 9 May, 1917, Lloyd George MSS., F16/1/8-9.

13. H. Norman to Lloyd George, 31 May and 18 June 1917, Lloyd George MSS., F41/6/1 and 5. Murray of Elibank, the former Liberal whip, seems also to have been engaged in the intrigue against Bertie. He was a friend to Esher and Le Roy-Lewis, and the representative of an oil drilling firm, whose efforts to secure a concession in Algeria had recently been frustrated. Rough notes by Bertie 31 March 1917; Bertie to Hardinge, 22 April 1917; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. Paul Painlevé was minister of war in the ministry of Alexandre Ribot. He succeeded Ribot as premier.

that towards the end of May the king was consulted by Lloyd George on Bertie's removal, and the question was also raised in the war cabinet. Hardinge, who had succeeded Nicolson, and to whom Bertie addressed many of his complaints, exercised little influence in matters relating to diplomatic appointments.¹⁴ Indeed, on the advice of Paul Cambon and his former private secretary Bertie travelled to London in June.¹⁵

Bertie's journey was accompanied by reports in the British press that he was on the point of retiring, and some in Paris believed it to mark the end of his official career.¹⁶ But the efforts of him and his friends to ensure the survival of his embassy were not in vain. The king with whom he spoke on 7 June promised him his support, and neither Lord Curzon, who was a member of the war cabinet, nor Balfour, the foreign secretary, gave him any cause for concern. Much to the annoyance of the prime minister, on 12 June The Times led with a spirited defence of Bertie's diplomacy and protested against the suggestion that he might be removed at this juncture in the war.¹⁷ Moreover, in Paris he obtained support from diverse quarters: from Alexandre Ribot, the premier. Basil Zaharoff, the arms merchant and Joseph Reinach, the journalist.¹⁸ Indeed by the end of June he

14. The king hoped that if Bertie were recalled, he would be succeeded by Hardinge. Stamfordham to Lloyd George, 30 May 1917, Lloyd George MSS., F29/1/42. Gordon Lennox, ii, 134. Athelstan-Johnson to Bertie, 2 June 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191.

15. Ibid. Rough Notes by Bertie, 31 May 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. W. Athelstan Johnson, who as an honorary attaché at the embassy had acted as Bertie's private secretary from 1905-1909, had been appointed as a temporary secretary at the embassy in May 1916.

16. Norman to Lloyd George, 12 June 1914, Lloyd George MSS., F41/6/4. Phipps to Bertie, 13 June 1917; Francis Howard to Bertie, 18 June 1917; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191.

17. Gordon Lennox, ii, 134-139. Hardinge to Penshurst, p.214.

18. Notes by Bertie, 22 June and 24 June 1917, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. In Paris Paul Cambon interceded with Ribot, the premier, on Bertie's behalf. P. Cambon to de Fleuriau, 22 July 1917, Correspondance, iii, 184-186. Alexandre Ribot was president of the council and minister of foreign affairs from March until September 1917.

seems to have succeeded in scotching Esher's plan. His position, however, in both London and Paris was weaker than it had been, and speculation continued about his future.¹⁹

During the latter part of 1917 Bertie's confidence in the security of his tenure at Paris increased. Clemenceau returned to power, Esher announced his intention of returning to England, and on 21 December Bonar Law told the Commons that Bertie was not shortly to be recalled. Reports which appeared a fortnight later in the London and Paris press that he was to be replaced by Lord Crewe were treated by Bertie in a distinctly light-hearted fashion.²¹ Nevertheless, his position was more precarious than he might have imagined.²²

Esher continued to draw Lloyd George's attention to the inadequacies of Bertie's diplomacy and to urge on him the need to make a change at Paris. Moreover, the prime minister had for sometime been contemplating the possibility of ridding himself of Field Marshalls Robertson and Haig, and by December he had also decided to remove from the war office their supporter, Derby.²³

19. Norman to Lloyd George, 18 June 1917, Lloyd George MSS., F41/6/5. Athelstan-Johnson to Bertie, 22 June 1917; Notes by Bertie, 24 June 1917; Bertie MSS., F.O.800/191.

20. Bertie to Stamfordham, 11 Dec. 1917, Bertie MSS., B.F.O.800/191. The Times, 21 Dec. 1917. Andrew Bonar Law was chancellor of the exchequer and a member of the war cabinet.

21. Gordon Lennox, ii, 240.

22. Even Hardinge, who generally defended Bertie's position, agreed with Repington in August 1917 that with regard to the Paris embassy 'a great diplomat de carriere was not needed now, as missions went over the water on every sort of occasion', A Court-Repington, ii, 25.

23. Field Marshall Sir William Robertson was C.I.G.S. S. Roskill, Hankey, Man of Secrets (3 vols. London, 1970-1974), i, 474-475. Paul Guinn, British Strategy and Politics 1914 to 1918 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 259-303.

Faced with the problem of how to secure such changes without provoking a major political row, he approached Derby in January 1918 with the offer of the Paris embassy. After insisting that he should have more powers than his predecessor Derby accepted this offer in principle.²⁴ When, however, in mid-February a quarrel over the future powers of the supreme war council at Versailles led to the resignation of Robertson, but not that of Haig, Derby hesitated over what course to follow. As a result he remained secretary of state for war for another two months.²⁵

Early in February Bertie learned from both Clemenceau and Hardinge that they had heard that Lloyd George intended to replace him, and on the 15th Stamfordham, who knew of the impending changes in the army and the government, warned him 'to be on the look out'.²⁶ His friends, however, felt reassured when Derby did not resign, and at the inter-allied conference at London in the following month Clemenceau and Pichon spoke strongly in his favour.²⁷ But on 4 April Bertie was taken ill with internal pains, and was again forced to retire to his sick bed. This, and the success of the German offensive on the Somme provided Lloyd George with an opportunity and a reason for shunting Derby out of the war office.

24. J.T.Davies, one of Lloyd George's secretaries, told C.P.Scott of The Manchester Guardian on 16 December 1917 that Lloyd George wanted to get rid of both Robertson and Haig, but that Derby had threatened resignation and, 'if he resigned, others would resign'. Journal 16-19 Dec.1917, Scott MSS., (B.M.) Add.50904. Diary 3 Feb. 1918, Hankey MSS., HNKY 1/4. R.S.Churchill, Lord Derby, pp.335-343.

25. R.S.Churchill, ibid. D.Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (6 vols., London, 1933-1936), v, 2784-2833. K.O.Morgan, 'Lloyd George's premiership: a study in "Prime Ministerial Government"', Historical Journal, xiii (1970), 138.

26. Bertie to Hardinge, 9 Feb.1918; Stamfordham to Bertie, 15 Feb. 1918; Bertie to Stamfordham, 18 Feb.1918; Bertie MSS.; B., F.O.800/191. Hardinge to Bertie, 5 March 1918, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/178.

27. Stamfordham to Bertie, 21 Feb.1918; Athelstan-Johnson to Bertie, 14 March 1918; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. Hardinge to Bertie, 20 March 1918, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/169.

With a view to avoiding any leakage to the press, he acted swiftly, and after securing Balfour's assent telegraphed to Bertie on 16 April to inform him that in view of his illness he was to be succeeded by Derby.²⁸

'You could not sack a kitchenmaid like that', Bertie told Neville Henderson, the official who had the unhappy task of helping him to decypher Lloyd George's telegram.²⁹ The prime minister's action was also resented by the king, who was only informed of it by telephone on the 16th. To J.T.Davies, the prime minister's secretary, Stamfordham wrote:

The King assumes that the Prime Minister has carefully considered the wisdom and expediency of changing his representative in Paris at this critical moment in the War, and replacing a diplomatist of Lord Bertie's vast experience, one who thoroughly understands the French language and diplomacy, besides being a personal friend of Monsieur Clemenceau, by Lord Derby who will, without any special equipment, make his debut in a new profession in this, the most important position in the diplomatic world.³⁰

The king was correct in his assessment of the likely French reaction. Indeed so upset was Clemenceau over Bertie's dismissal that at his first interview with his successor, he refused to speak except in French and through an interpreter.³¹

28. Balfour to R.R., 15 April 1918, Lloyd George MSS., C8/50. A Court-Repington, ii, 313. R.S.Churchill, Lord Derby, pp.349-350.

29. Neville Henderson was at that time a clerk in the chancery of the embassy. N.Henderson, p.86. Hardinge regarded the mode of Bertie's recall as a 'scandal'. At the time he commented: 'The poor man has been abominably treated in the way he was practically dismissed at a moment's notice'. Hardinge of Penshurst, p.226. Ubi supra, R.Warman, 158.

30. Stamfordham to Davies, 16 April 1918, Lloyd George MSS., F29/2/14. (The greater part of this letter is printed in R.S. Churchill, Lord Derby, p.351.

31. N.Henderson, op.cit. Derby certainly seems to have felt uneasy at Paris, and he much resented the way in which he had been treated by Lloyd George. He observed to Balfour on 22 April: 'I am like a fish out of water almost homesick and quite convinced that unless you help me, as I know you will, the PM will simply have shunted me to make room for Milner by promising power he never intended to give. I wonder if he has ever spoken the truth even by accident'. Derby to Balfour, 22 April 1918, Balfour MSS., (B.M.) Add.49743. Derby to H.Wilson, 25 April 1918, Derby MSS.

As an explanation of Derby's appointment, Davies replied to Stamfordham that the change had become imperative because there was no-one of 'high-standing' at Paris, who possessed a thorough understanding of the military situation. 'In consequence of this', Davies observed, 'it had been necessary ~~xx~~ to keep sending Lord Milner back and forth to discuss matters of high military policy with the French Government at a time when he can be ill-spared from the War Cabinet'.³² This, however, was a lame excuse. In the previous April Lloyd George had joined with Bertie in denigrating Derby's intelligence and ability. Moreover, as a result of the ministerial changes which accompanied Derby's appointment, Milner was removed from the war cabinet and became secretary of state for war.³³

When on 18 May Balfour wrote to Asquith about Bertie's removal, he too cited the need to have Derby at Paris because of his knowledge of military questions. But he also pointed out that Bertie was not 'what he was physically, a year and a half ago'.³⁴ Indeed, Bertie himself admitted that he was not well enough to continue at his post.³⁵ On 17 April he had suffered a relapse, and when in June he was finally able to return to England, he was still a sick man.³⁶ There was some improvement

32. Davies to Stamfordham, 17 April 1918, Lloyd George MSS., F29/2/16. A similar explanation was given by Lloyd George to the war cabinet on 18 April. War Cabinet, 394, Cab.23/6. Lord Milner was a member of the war cabinet.

33. Bertie's own sobriquet for Derby was 'Tomtit'. Bertie to Hardinge, 16 Jan.1917; Rough notes by Bertie, 20 April 1917; Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/191. A.M.Collin, Procensul in Politics: a study of Lord Milner in Opposition and Power (London,1964), pp.508-510.

34. Balfour to Asquith, 18 May 1918, Asquith MSS., 18.

35. Derby to Balfour, 28 May 1918, Balfour MSS., (B.M.)Add.49743.

36. Derby to Balfour, 1 May 1918, Lloyd George MSS., F52/1/31 and

33. There seems to have been some confusion about the nature of Bertie's illness. Clemenceau, who was a doctor of medicine by training, believed that Bertie had an intestinal obstruction resulting from a cancer. Poincaré, x, 155.

in his health during the autumn, and he was able to take a keen interest in the making of the peace settlement at Paris. But after a short illness, he died suddenly on 26 September 1919. Four days later he was taken from London to Thame, where he was buried in the chancel wall of the parish church.³⁷

Bertie left a formidable impression on the minds of his contemporaries. 'A big landmark and a tower of strength in time of trouble disappears with Lord Bertie's recall', observed one member of the Paris embassy on 20 April 1918.³⁸ Fifty years later Vansittart wrote that he was 'not only a great ambassador...but the very last of the great ambassadors'.³⁹ Others, however, were less flattering in the opinions which they expressed about the former diplomat. He was, according to Esher, a representative of a 'class long since passed away', whose conversational powers were 'matured in the far distant atmosphere of Holland House and Strawberry Hill'.⁴⁰ In Caillaux's estimation he possessed the soul of 'un hobereau britannique qui ne serait pas sorti de son trou', and a mind 'fermé, obstinement fermé à toute conception élevée de politique extérieure'.⁴¹

Caillaux's charges were not without foundation. The views of Bertie on international affairs were empirical and pragmatic, and he had no sympathy for abstract theories or the pursuit of ideals which seemed to threaten the diplomatic order with which he was familiar. He dismissed the idea of a peace maintained

37. The ceremonies connected with Bertie's funeral were elaborate. The coffin was taken to the railway station at Thame by motor hearse, and then transferred to a large Oxfordshire farm wagon drawn by two black shire horses. In accordance with Bertie's wishes six of his employees from his Thame and Tiddington estates dressed in white smocks acted as his bearers. The Times 10 Oct. 1919, 11, ii.

38. Extract from a letter from H.M. embassy at Paris, 20 April 1918, enclosed in Hankey to Lloyd George, Lloyd George MSS., F29/2/39. Stamfordham in recommending that Bertie should be raised to an earldom reminded Lloyd George that in Paris 'he gained his reputation of being the best British Ambassador that has been there for many years'. Stamfordham to Lloyd George, 11 July 1918. Lloyd George MSS., F29/2/39. 39. Vansittart, p. 53.

40. Fraser, p. 372. 41. Caillaux, ii, 134-37.

by a society of nations as impracticable.⁴² Zionism, he condemned as 'rot', and Britain's association with it would, he predicted, seriously damage her position in the muslim world. 'Professional Diplomacy', he reflected in April 1919, 'has shown little foresight and committed great blunders, but now about the amateurs who are negotiating, such as Wilson, House, Lloyd George, Smuts and others with their so-called ideals - self-determination, League of Nations, moderation in terms to be exacted from Germany - dubbed statesmanship'.⁴³ Experience had taught him to regard with suspicion politicians. Their 'trade' he considered a dishonest one, and their ideas he believed to be 'fogged by the vision of the electoral urns'.

Bertie had no strong political convictions.⁴⁴ During the spring of 1910 he castigated Asquith's cabinet as 'vacillating, inconsistent, dishonest, and reckless' in their handling of the constitutional crisis.⁴⁵ But such references to Britain's domestic affairs are rare in Bertie's correspondence. The political complexions of the governments that he served were generally of interest to him only in so far as they might effect foreign policy. Similarly Bertie denied that he had any bias in his attitude towards Britain's continental neighbours. In his conversation with Baron von Stumm in December 1911 he refuted the accusation that he was a Germanophobe, and insisted that he was an Anglomane.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the defence of what he

42. Gordon Lennox, ii, 229.

43. Ibid, 325.

44. Ibid, 302. He had none too high an opinion of French politicians. According to an account given by Asquith to Lord Rendel, Bertie summed up French ministers by saying that 'whenever a new Minister was appointed, his first three acts were to buy a startling portfolio to take to the Chamber, to invest in certain shares to be turned to account in the Lobby, and to engage a higher-class and more expensive mistress'. F.E.Hamer (ed.), The Personal Papers of Lord Rendel (London, 1931), p.180.

45. Bertie to Hardinge, 3 March 1910. Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/174

46. Bertie to Grey, 21 Dec.1911, B.D., x, pt.2, no.265. Bertie also made this assertion to Caillaux. Caillaux, ii, op.cit.

defined as British interests did lead him to give his overriding support to certain lines of policy. Between 1905 and 1914 the two most consistent elements in Bertie's thinking about Britain's foreign relations were his distrust of Germany, and his desire to maintain the entente with France.

That Germany was intent upon under-mining the Anglo-French understanding remained Bertie's conviction from the first Moroccan crisis until the outbreak of the first world war. He resented both the challenge which the development of the German navy posed to Britain's imperial security and the presumption of the authorities in Berlin that they might freely trespass upon what other powers ^{considered} ~~coverted~~ as their own preserves in Africa and Asia. Often imperious in his judgements upon German diplomacy, he was inclined to over-simplify the issues at stake. He could see little advantage for Britain in the efforts of Grey and his colleagues to improve Anglo-German relations through naval and colonial accords. 'I cannot believe', he wrote to Nicolson in March 1911, 'that by a paper agreement the fundamentally opposing interests of the British and German peoples can be reconciled'.⁴⁷ Yet Bertie had no desire, as some commentators alleged, to promote conflict between Britain and Germany. He told von Stumm that his bellicosity 'had been limited to the feeling... that Lord Palmerston would have thought it preferable to bring matters to a head rather than to sit still and submit to the increasing expenditure of vast sums to maintain the supremacy of England at sea'. But times, he admitted, had changed: wars were no longer as cheap as they had once been, and it was now more necessary to take public opinion into account. He expressed himself in similar terms when in February 1912 Lloyd George suggested to him that in the previous year the French 'had thrown away the finest

47. Bertie to Nicolson, 15 March 1911, Bertie MSS., B, F.O.800/186.

opportunity they had ever had or were likely to have again to try conclusions with Germany'. The only battle Bertie could foresee was 'one of money' over which power could afford to outbuild the other in warships.⁴⁸

During both the Moroccan crises Bertie advised the government in London to support the French in resistance to German pretensions. Germany was not, however, the only power with which Bertie thought Britain should deal firmly. He opposed concessions to Russia in both the Baltic and the Balkans. Likewise he warned Nicolson in 1910, 'We do not improve our chances of permanent good relations with the Americans by giving way when we are in the right'.⁴⁹ Where France was concerned, he evidently felt that his point had been proved. Fashoda, he told Poincaré in January 1912, had removed the impression then prevalent on the continent that England would accept anything rather than fight and had led Britain and France to 'come to terms with each other'.⁵⁰ A resolute stand by Salisbury had paved the way for a colonial bargain which had formed the basis of the entente.

Bertie found good reason to criticize the Quai d'Orsay in its handling of some matters, but during his tenure of the Paris embassy his attachment to the Anglo-French understanding did not waver. Indeed, he made a constant endeavour to ensure that first Lansdowne and then Grey truly appreciated the political sensitivities of the French. His efforts were not in vain, and Grey tried

48. Bertie to Grey, 21 Dec.1911, op.cit. Memorandum by Bertie, 19 Feb.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/171. It is worth noting in this context the verdict of Theodor Wolff, the editor of the Berliner Tageblatt, on Bertie. He wrote in 1934: 'It is clear from the official documents since published in London that Sir Francis Bertie was far from being an intriguing war monger; he was a man of prudence and a cool observer'. Theodor Wolff, The Eve of 1914 (English trans., London, 1935), p.110.

49. Bertie to Nicolson, 27 Nov.1910, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/181.

50. Bertie to Grey, 22 Jan.1912, Bertie MSS., A, F.O.800/166.

with scrupulous care to avoid any action that might give offence in France. Bertie also succeeded in winning from French politicians and officials their confidence in himself as the representative of his government and as a loyal supporter of the entente. Unlike his successor he did not keep 'practically open house' at the embassy.⁵¹ Invitations to his entertainments, commented Captain Kelly, 'were more sought after for the social prestige they conferred than for the ritual pleasure they brought to the recipient'.⁵² Nevertheless, his robust personality and the length of his stay at Paris combined in Clemenceau's eyes to make him a part of that city.⁵³

As long as the entente remained no more than what Eyre Crowe defined as 'a frame of mind' and a 'view of a general policy', it was obviously of importance to its supporters in England that they should have at Paris an ambassador who commanded the respect of prominent Frenchmen.⁵⁴ Grey certainly valued Bertie's opinions and his work, and he was prepared to allow him wide discretion in dealing with complicated negotiations. Nicolson assured him in December 1911 that he knew of no other ambassador who occupied a higher position in respect of the trust placed in him by the British government.⁵⁵ Yet it would be difficult either to assess the degree of influence which Bertie had upon Grey, or to select any occasion upon which he might be said to have exercised a decisive influence upon the determination of foreign policy. Many of the views which he expressed on relations with France and Germany were not dissimilar to those held by other

51. G. Rendel, The Sword and the Olive; recollections of diplomacy and the Foreign Service, 1913-1954 (London, 1957), p.44.

52. Journal as a Naval Attaché, Kelly MSS., Kel/3. Another of Bertie's contemporaries commented on him that 'with the exception of a good cook and stately train de maison, he had few of the superficial qualities expected of an Ambassador'. V. Corbett, Reminiscences autobiographical and diplomatic (London, 1927), p.47.

53. Gordon Lennox, ii, 299. 54. Minute by Eyre Crowe on Bertie to Grey, 31 Jan. 1911, F.O. 371/1117, despt. no. 58.

55. Nicolson to Bertie, 7 Dec. 1911, Bertie MSS., B, F.O. 800/186.

officials who were in closer and more continuous contact with the foreign secretary.⁵⁶ He may have contributed towards bringing about better understanding between Britain and France. If, however, the bonds which linked the two countries were tightened during this period, that was due more to the ineptitude of the authorities in the Wilhelmstrasse than to the activities of Bertie in the Faubourg St.Honore'.

Bertie had serious shortcomings as an intermediary. Of him Grey wrote in 1924 that he could 'express dissent by an ironical question even more forcibly than by a direct negative'. 'He could say things', Grey observed, 'that were crisp even to the point of brusqueness, and yet make the person to whom he said them feel that he was well disposed and a friend'.⁵⁷ Unfortunately this was not invariably the case. Even one as sympathetic towards him as Vansittart found him 'unnecessarily rude at times'.⁵⁸ His colleagues at the Foreign Office may have accustomed themselves to his language, but others who knew him less well, found it more difficult to do so. George Murray, an official of the Treasury, who had to put up with Bertie's persistent grouching about the upkeep of the embassy buildings, complained to Grey in April 1908 about the ambassador's '"currative" argument', which entitled you 'to use language which does not mean what you say if you can assume at the same time that the person addressed is sufficiently instruc-

56. It is also important to remember that Grey was anything but the tool of his permanent officials. The point has been nicely made by Keith Wilson that 'although he (Grey) built with the bricks provided for him by the Foreign Office he was able, within limits, to arrange them in his own way, and after his own fashion'. K.M.Wilson, The Role and Influence of the Professional Advisers to the Foreign Office on the Making of British Foreign Policy from December 1905 to August 1914 (unpublished D.Phil.thesis, University of Oxford, 1972), pp.347-348.

57. Gordon Lennox, i, p.ix.

58. Vansittart, p.54.

ted to know that you don't mean it'.⁵⁹ What Grey termed an 'ironical question' was regarded by Caillaux as a 'sneer'. To a minister of his temperament Bertie's diplomacy seemed deliberately provocative, and his language too frank.⁶⁰ Indeed it is not difficult to understand why Bertie's blustering about German policies and intentions may have been mistaken in Berlin for Bellicosity.

The zeal with which Bertie gave voice to his opinions may as in 1905 have contributed to a misunderstanding in France of Britain's standpoint. It may also have led the French government to pursue courses that they might otherwise have neglected. In 1912 Bertie encouraged Poincaré to oppose more vigorously the efforts of the Liberal government to achieve with Germany an agreement on a political formula, and two years later he suggested to Doumergue the basis of a consultative accord that he might seek from Grey. Nevertheless, there is no conclusive evidence with which to demonstrate that before 1914 he did not endeavour to accurately interpret the wishes of Lansdowne and Grey in his official dealings with the Quai d'Orsay. If on occasions the advice which he offered to the French went far beyond the letter of the instructions that he had received, it was not so much because he sought to misrepresent his masters as to influence them.

Bertie was never content simply to act the part of chief spokesman for the Foreign Office at Paris. From the embassy he poured out his thoughts in private letters and memoranda on a variety of issues, some of which had only a tenuous connexion with Anglo-French relations. He could after all draw upon a long experience of dealing with the administration of foreign

59. G. Murray to Grey, 20 April 1908, Grey MSS., F.O.800/101.

60. Caillaux, ii, 134. Poincaré referred in his memoirs to Bertie expressing 'les questions avec une inoffensive ironie mondaine', Poincaré, i, 150.

affairs. His career spanned more than half a century of British diplomacy. It had begun in the year that Palmerston's government had stood accused of abandoning Denmark to the forces of Austria and Prussia, and ended only nine months before the entry of a triumphant British army into the Rhineland. Within the Foreign Office Bertie had striven to make his voice heard, and he had championed the cause of those who had sought to reform its administration. Yet after nine years at Paris he had found it difficult to adapt his methods to the conditions of war. Moreover, although older diplomatic practices were to survive the advent of the 'New Diplomacy', Bertie would have been a misfit in the post-war era. When Derby arrived at the embassy in 1918 he found every paper there neatly folded into four, docketed on the outside, tied with pink tape, and filed in one of four or five series; a system which dated back to the middle of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ In one respect Vansittart was right. Bertie was the last of his kind.

61. George Rendel, p.43.

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Primary Material.

Official Archives.

1. Public Record Office, London.

Foreign Office papers:

General correspondence before 1906 in the series

FO 27 France
FO 64 Germany
FO 65 Russia
FO 72 Spain
FO 99 Morocco.

Correspondence for the period 1906-1914 contained in the series

FO 367 Africa
FO 368 commercial
FO 371 political.

The papers of the British embassy at Paris contained in the series FO 146.

The papers of the cabinet and of the Committee of Imperial Defence (prefixed Cab.).

2. Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris.

The political and commercial correspondence of the French foreign ministry contained in the Nouvelle Série Relie (prefixed NS).

Private Manuscript Collections.

The following list contains only those collections to which reference is made in the footnotes of the thesis.

Asquith MSS., Bodleian Library, Oxford.

There are but few references to Bertie in Asquith's papers, but his accounts of the proceedings of the cabinet are useful.

Balfour MSS., British Museum, London.

This collection contains a few interesting papers relating to the British government's attitude towards the Anglo-French entente and Morocco in the spring of 1905.

Bertie MSS., Public Record Office, London.

Bertie's papers are invaluable not only for the study of his career but also for any examination of currents of opinion within the British foreign service before 1914. After his appointment to Rome, Bertie kept copies of most of the letters and memoranda which he wrote.

Campbell-Bannerman MSS., British Museum, London.

Campbell-Bannerman took little interest in foreign affairs, but this collection contains some interesting letters from Grey and records of cabinet decisions.

Carnock MSS., Public Record Office, London.

A valuable collection for the study of the making of British foreign policy before 1914.

Delcassé MSS., Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris.

C. Andrew has already made considerable use of this collection in the preparation of his study of Delcassé's foreign policy. These papers reveal little about Bertie's diplomacy.

Derby MSS., City of Liverpool Library, Record Office.

This collection evidently served as the basis of R.S. Churchill's biography of the 17th earl of Derby. It contains some letters which refer to Bertie's dismissal, but nothing of importance that cannot be found elsewhere.

Grey MSS., Public Record Office, London.

A vital collection for the study of British foreign policy between 1905 and 1914.

Haldane MSS., National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Although Haldane's papers are useful for the study of the Liberal government's foreign policy, they contain little that has been of any value for the completion of this thesis.

Hankey MSS., Churchill College, Cambridge.

Hankey's papers are of obvious interest to any student of policy-making in Britain during the first world war. There are some references to Bertie in Hankey's diary.

Hardinge MSS., University Library, Cambridge.

Invaluable for the study of Bertie's career and the making of policy in the Foreign Office.

Howard Kelly MSS., National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

This collection contains a manuscript which was evidently intended for publication, and which gives an account of life at the Paris embassy during the time that Kelly was the naval attaché there.

Lansdowne MSS., Public Record Office, London.

An extensive collection of correspondence and other papers of especial value for the study of the period during which Lansdowne was foreign secretary.

Lascelles MSS., Public Record Office, London.

Lascelles private correspondence is of obvious importance for the study of Anglo-German relations before 1908. Some letters

in this collection are useful in helping to trace the course of Bertie's career.

Lloyd George MSS., Beaverbrook Library, London.

This collection sheds little light on the making of British foreign policy before 1914. But Lloyd George's correspondence with Esher, Le Roy-Lewis, and H. Norman reveals much about the circumstances surrounding Bertie's dismissal.

Lowther MSS., Public Record Office, London.

Most of the papers in this collection refer to the affairs of Morocco and Turkey. Some of Lowther's correspondence is useful for the study of Anglo-French commercial and financial relations in the Ottoman empire.

Pichon MSS., Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris.

As this collection contains Pichon's private correspondence with the representatives of France in Berlin, Constantinople, London, Madrid, Rome, St. Petersburg, and Vienna it is of obvious interest to any student of French foreign policy in this period. There are, however, only a few references to Bertie in the collection.

Poincaré MSS., Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Poincaré's diaries, which are included in this collection, make interesting but difficult reading. Substantial portions of them have, however, already been published by Poincaré in his memoirs. His correspondence should be of great value to anyone engaged on the study of French foreign policy in the 1920's.

Reinach MSS., Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

The bulk of the letters contained in this vast collection relate to the domestic affairs of France. Nevertheless, Reinach's correspondence with the prince of Monaco does reveal the extent to which the latter was involved in maintaining unofficial contacts between the French and German governments during the first Moroccan crisis.

Ripon MSS., British Museum, London.

Ripon's correspondence contains little that is relevant to the study of Anglo-French relations in this period.

Sanderson MSS., Public Record Office, London.

A disappointing collection which contains little of importance that has not been published.

C.P. Scott MSS., British Museum, London.

Scott's diary has already been edited and published by T. Wilson. Much else that is useful in the collection also appears in Hammond's biography of Scott.

Spender MSS., British Museum, London.

This ~~collection~~ contains some letters from Grey, and an interesting assortment of papers relating to the war crisis of August 1914.

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